

DIVINE PERSONALITY

*A Study in the
Philosophy of Religion*

BY
WILLIAM M. TRAP

*A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor
of Philosophy in the University of Michigan.*

GEORGE WAHR, PUBLISHER
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PREFATORY STATEMENT

What I attempt to prove in the following pages is that the historic, theistic conception of Divine Personality need not be abandoned because of the objections raised against it during the last quarter of a century. With this I do not mean that the idea of Divine Personality is in no need of further development, but that the objections from various quarters are not unanswerable, much less coercive, and that, consequently, this necessary development can carry forward the historical continuity which, theology aside, from the point of view of the philosophy of religion can trace its lineage to Plato. As over against opposing views, my thesis is that the theistic conception of a personal God as the object of religious experience is not only defensible, but does most adequate justice both to the unique requirements of religion and to our reflective queries.

The uniqueness of this study, if it have any, lies in the manner in which the problem is treated. Perhaps the most clear-cut delineation that has been made of the difference between the standpoints of theology and the philosophy of religion is that the former is theocentric, the latter anthropocentric. Though in this preliminary study of one of the problems of the philosophy of religion I have endeavored to be faithful to the anthropocentric viewpoint, I have made use of what theology has to offer, being convinced that much of contemporary thought upon the problem impoverishes itself by neglecting the material which technical theology can contribute in this field. Therein, I think, lies the greatest weakness of contemporary philosophy of religion.

If any originality lurk in this thesis, it lies, I think, in the linking up of Divine Personality with eternity, infinity and absoluteness.

CHAPTER I.

GOD AND PERSONALITY

Countless quarrels there have been about the problem of the relation between theology and philosophy. That theology can take the attitude of ignoring philosophy is just as fallacious as that philosophy, especially as it concerns itself with the problem of religion, can treat theology with disdain. For, theology continually and inevitably works with the metaphysical concepts of essence, attribute relation, being, becoming, nature, and so on, almost as much as technical philosophy does. Indeed in spite of its special standpoint, all competent theology is saturated with metaphysics.

Especially, I think is this true with reference to some of the problems which have been veritable storm-centers in the realm of philosophy of religion during the past quarter of a century. The problems of the personality of God, of Revelation, of infinity, of the relation between God and that Absolute which certain philosophers adore, cannot well be adequately investigated without taking into account what theology has to say about them in its field and from its point of view. As "all flesh is not the same flesh," and all theology is not the same theology, the philosopher undoubtedly has the right to turn a deaf ear to a theology not worthy of the name. But a theology which really investigates its object, God, and refuses to bow in the modern house of Rimmon, seeking in the mere phenomenology of religious experience its sufficient and only object, can furnish the philosophy of religion with

invaluable "Lehnsätze." Given a theology with defensible metaphysical conceptions, then why, indeed, should the philosophy of religion ignore or esteem as dross what such theology has said about the problems which are the common heritage of both? To a certain extent philosophy may here profitably turn the scholastic tables, and make use of a competent theology as *ancilla philosophiae*. Let it be true that each has its sovereign sphere, its own standpoint, its own principle, neither can say to the other: "I have no need of thee."

I have no desire to raise, much less to attempt to solve the problem of the relation between *theology* and philosophy, which is, of course, an entirely different problem than that of *religion* and philosophy. I merely say this to indicate complete agreement with what was written some thirty years ago:

"There are three regions, at least, where amid contemporary controversies, theology proper could both assist and correct philosophical speculation. . . . In connection with the first (the question of the personality of God) it is valuable to emphasize the religious apprehension of God, with its implication of personality, in order that the problem may be viewed from another side than that of intellect, with its condemnation of personality as a phenomenon of the finite."¹

One need not necessarily subscribe to the doctrine of Degrees of Truth and Reality to admit that today this is even more true than when it was written, due, I think, to two factors. One is the decadence of theology, which has but too often deteriorated into sociological ethics or a so-called empirical science.² The second is the phenomenal growth of the problem, partly the result of copious water-

¹ R. M. Wenley, *Contemporary Theology and Theism*, pp. 126, 127.

² Macintosh, *Theology as an Empirical Science*.

ing from philosophic brows following the appearance of Mr. F. H. Bradley's epoch-making "Appearance and Reality." With the possible exception of the problem of revelation, the question of divine personality has received more attention than any other. That especially the Idealists of every complexion have been so deeply engrossed in this problem that in this field "of the making of books there is no end," is not surprising, in the light of the emphasis Idealism has always placed upon the necessity of a moral interpretation of the world-order.

But reflective speculation impoverishes itself and leads merely to empty logical abstractions which do not satisfy the whole of man, when it totally ignores the valuable aid theology can offer in a field where technical knowledge is essential. Let it be true that truth is neither a matter of majority vote nor of length of days. Nevertheless the speculative thinker runs grave risks if he takes the attitude of self-sufficiency. The results of the three hundred years of struggle and controversy over the Trinitarian Dogma are fraught with rich significance for speculative thought upon the problem of a personal Deity. The ripest thought upon divine attributes, especially infinity, eternity, spirituality, personality, has weight when the dogmatic utterance is repeated unthinkingly, "Personality is limitation," with its implied: "A personal God must therefore be a limited or a finite God." For the question of the identity or lack thereof between God and the philosophical Absolute, the theological doctrines of transcendence and immanence are far from insignificant. It is not surprising, therefore, that the most competent work accomplished in this field during the last twenty-five years has been done by those who, if not theologians, have had at least considerable knowledge of technical theology. Witness, however their views may diverge, D'Arcy, Rashdall, Moberly, Pringle-Pattison, and especially Webb.

All this does not mean that I shall attempt a theological treatment of the problem of divine personality. But it does mean that I shall not hesitate to use the "Lehnsätze" theology can offer.

That in the realm of religion, consciousness of relation to or fellowship with a personal God belongs to its very essence, is, I think, an incontrovertible fact of empirical experience. The religious experience demands personality on both sides of the equation. Reverent worship and self-losing devotion is possible only when the object thereof is personal. It is significant, therefore, that in every historical religion at least some kind of personality is attributed to Deity. This, it would seem, is true even of such an apparently impersonal religion as Buddhism, for as soon as it became a practical religion, Buddha was deified.³ But even if it could be shown that there exists some extremely low form of religion, as for example that of the Australian Bushman, in which there is not the faintest trace of any idea of personality of Deity, this would, I think, have little or no significance for the problem as it presents itself to us now. For, the attempt to seek the essential, indispensable elements of religion in the lowest form of its manifestation instead of the highest, is based upon the idea that the lowest form known to us now is the nearest to the original form. Rather a gratuitous assumption, proof for which is still lacking, in spite of all that has been said and guessed about so-called primitive religion.⁴

Fact, however, is that not only does the Christian religion deem personality an essential characteristic of Deity, but every other religion either expresses or implies the same thing in its practical devotion and its ritual.

³ Bavinck, *Wysb. der Openb.*

⁴ Bavinck, *Dogm. I.*

To look upon this as mere illusion, psychical inversion, or, as Lehman does, manifestation and result of "Urdummheit," is an evasion rather than a solution of the problem. The question is, rather, not merely what do we, but what *can* we, and above all what *must* we construe this personality of Deity, to which all religious experience gives witness, to mean.

To answer this, it does not suffice to present an analysis and interpretation of human personality as the modern psychologist conceives of it. Quite the contrary. I am quite convinced that the modern psychological analysis of human personality is not the proper approach to the problem of Divine personality. For several reasons. To paraphrase. Religious experience divided by psychology leaves a remainder. In the religious experience we undoubtedly have communion of personalities. But the division of the one by the other leaves an inexplicable remainder which still belongs to its essence. Or, in other words, Infinite personality cannot be explained merely upon the basis of finite personality. This is true, I think, whatever our attempted explanation of human personality may be. How patently absurd, for example, would it be should we attempt to apply Paton's conception of personality to any interpretation of Deity: "The idea of a personality is an organismal conception and expresses the functioning of the machine as a whole."⁵ To account for personality merely upon the basis of mechanical functions of a neuro-physiological organism, typical of certain materialistic, behavioristic conceptions, is entirely inadequate. But even with an entirely different type of psychological interpretation the same gap remains. Not only is the personality of Deity of great practical religious import, but it also confronts us with an ultimate, metaphysical ques-

⁵ Paton, *Human Behavior*, p. 94.

tion. And for this problem "the psychological and psychological descriptive interpretations prove to be insufficiently ultimate. The former takes the self to pieces for the sake of so doing, the other calls attention to the parts in action. Neither specifically addresses itself to the essence of personality."⁶ If we admit, as I think we must, that "an imperfect personality is the most that we can attribute even to the most richly endowed of human souls,"⁷ and, with Lotze,⁸ that perfect personality is found only in God, it is patent that this psychological approach is inadequate and unsatisfactory. Not man . . . "denn den Gottesbegriff formt uns ausschliesslich das ganze Wesen der Persönlichkeit."⁹

Moreover, personality as used of Deity must of necessity have not merely a higher,¹⁰ but even a different meaning than when used of man. This lies in the very nature of the case. Any concept attributed to Absolute Being has shades and nuances of meaning inapplicable to finite being. Differences of this type, however, will be discussed later.

C. C. J. Webb, very much to the point as usual, calls attention to the fact that historically the discussions about personality begin with the theological discussions centering about the problems of the Trinity and of Christology, rather than with psychological investigation and analysis, or even reflective speculations.¹¹ And any adequate investigation of the ultimate nature of personality, considered apart from all human imperfections and limitations as it is conceivably an attribute of the Supreme Reality,

⁶ Wenley, *Contemporary Theol.*, 179.

⁷ Rashdall, *Personality*. (In: Sturt: *Personal Idealism*).

⁸ Lotze, *Microcosmus*, II, 688.

⁹ Rocholl, *Der Christliche Gottesbegriff*, p. 71.

¹⁰ Galloway, *Phil. of Rel.*, 494.

¹¹ Webb, *God and Personality*, 20 ff.

must seek some other starting-point than a dissection of the imperfect and finite. Perhaps we may discover that we can know Absolute personality only after analogy to our finite personality. But is it necessary to add that analogy is not explanation? Or, to put the problem in its ultimate form, since, I think, the epistemological treatment of the genesis of our knowledge of human personality is not as adequate an approach to the problem of divine personality as is the historical-metaphysical approach: Must we think of God as personal *because* man is a person, or has man's personality its ultimate ground and its archetype in the personality of God? Or again: Is God what he is *because* man is what he is, or is man what he is *because* God is what He is? Or yet again: Does the character of finite being determine the character of Infinite Being or *vice versa*? Is finite or is Absolute personality ultimate? In each case we shall, I think, find the latter to be true. Metaphysically, in Bradleyan terminology, whether one agree with him or not, not "appearance" but "reality" is ultimate, whatever the relation between the two may be. Thus also personality in Absolute Being is ultimate, and not that in finite being. Also for this reason the psychological approach is inadequate, however much light psychology may cast upon certain aspects of the problem in later phases of treatment. The psychology of religion, as we now know it, does not solve the ultimate problems of religion. So also the ultimate question of divine personality needs a different angle of approach than the psychological, especially since so many of the widely diverging views of the psychologists depart entirely from what has historically always been the accepted view of the meaning of *divine* personality.

As he is so often, so here also¹² Webb is undoubtedly

¹² Webb, *God and Personality*, 35. ff.

quite right in attacking the problem from the point of view of the historical meanings attaching to the terminology, especially as this was used in the development of the Trinitarian dogma. The ignoring of historical continuity must, of course, inevitably result in the most indefensible individualism, so often evidenced in the attitude: what has always been meant does not make the slightest difference. I mean this, and thus it is: *ipse dixit*. Under the influence of certain modern conceptions of personality one may form an opinion as to what the phrase "Personality of God," or a "personal God" may mean, but whether that has always been, or even now can be the meaning attached to such a phrase, "that" *a la* Kipling, "is another story." E.g., "It has to be noted that *persona* and our 'person' are not the same thing."¹³

Even a very sketchy outline of the historical background of the terminology used in the problem will, I think, be rather illuminating.

The pedigree of our term "personality," is, of course, obvious. But to trace it back to the Latin *persona* really avails us little should we hope to find in that way what was originally meant by the idea of divine personality. For in spite of the fact that the use of *persona* can be traced to indicate the mask held before the face of an actor to indicate the rôle portrayed, and that this would indicate, perhaps, an adaptation from πρόσωπον (*prosopon*), we are still in the dark as to its precise origin. The merry quarrels of etymologists have but ended in uncertain conjectures. Schelling's winged word, "Origins are always from darkness into light," is applicable also here.¹⁴

¹³ Harnack, *History of Dogma*, IV, 117.

¹⁴ Trendelenburg (*History of the Word Person*) quotes from Aulus Gellius (180 A. D.) who refers to the conjecture made by

But though we cannot trace the exact etymological lineage of *persona*, its usage in classical and patristic Latin is not so obscure. Meaning first of all a rôle, or a part played by an individual, it was not at once synonymous with *homo*. The word attained an ethical significance among the Stoics, especially with Epictetus.¹⁵ That it should further acquire a legal meaning was quite natural, for in pleading before a court "the plaintive (*actor*) and the defendant, in plea and counter-plea, resemble the masks, the persons, on the stage. Accordingly, *persona* is a favorite expression for plaintiff and defendant."¹⁶ So it would seem that however dark the etymological origins of the word *persona* may be it can be linked up in meaning and usage with πρόσωπον.

When, however, the term *persona* is applied to Deity we find a rather different situation, and this indeed is not surprising. For, competent thinkers have always felt that terminology applicable to finite being is inade-

Gabius Bassus that *persona* is derived from *personando*, sounding through. Trendelenburg rejects this as also the suggestion of Scalinger, *peri soma*, around the waist. He also refers to the derivation suggested by Forcellini, that *persona* is the result of a transformation of πρόσωπον.

Though Trendelenburg's work is by no means recent, the following from Zimmerman (1915) shows that what the former says is still applicable to the situation: "... the family relation of *persona* has not yet been discovered." p. 9. "*persona*: Skutsch (W. Arch. 15, 145) sieht hierin ein etruskisches Lehnwort, sich stützend auf eine etruskische Inschrift, auf der unter einer Maskierten Person *persu* steht; danach wurde im Latein aus *perso-onis* (für *perso*) ein Verb *personare* und mit Rückbildung (cf. *pugnare pugna*) *persona*; auch *histrio* sei nach Livius aus dem Etruskischen entlehnt worden. Beachtung verdient auch die Ansicht, *persona* sei aus dem griechischen πρόσωπα entlehnt worden; denn *mimus* ist ja auch eine griechische Entelung. Wenn etwa bei spielsweise der Plural πρόσωπων infolge von Dissimilation und in Anlehnung an *personare* zu *prosona* bzw. *persona* wurde?"

¹⁵ Trendelenburg, *History of the Word Person*, pp. 11, 12.

¹⁶ Idem, p. 13.

quate to express precisely and accurately what we conceive Deity to be. Consequently a term may often mean one thing when used of finite and quite a different thing when used of Absolute Being. Of course this does not satisfy us, and that Bradley inveighs against this so vehemently in his characteristic, incisive style, can well be understood. But whether we like it or not, historically that has always been the case, and many disputes have arisen out of forgetfulness of this fact. Indeed, this situation is inescapable, in part because of the limitations of human expression, in part due to the fact that the very idea of Deity is such, especially for our religious consciousness, that we feel every *nomen* to be ultimately inadequate. When, therefore, the Fathers attempted to express their conception of Deity and personality they found the task to be one long struggle. Classical usage, both of Greek and Latin, did not adequately express their thought, and yet they were bound to language as they knew it.

The application of *persona* to Deity in the development of the Trinitarian dogma cannot be understood except in the light of its relation to ὑπόστασις and, indeed, it is questionable whether the words person and personality would have attained the meaning they have for us today, had it not been for the fact that the Latin Fathers used *persona* to indicate what the Greek Fathers meant by ὑπόστασις.¹⁷ Even more, the philosophical use of *person* roots in theological usage.

At first, as was to be expected, terminology was used in a very loose way. Οὐσία, φύσις, ὑπόστασις, πρόσωπον were not clearly differentiated. Precise differentiations are usually the result of criticism upon, or wrong usage

¹⁷ Webb, *God and Personality*, 36, 39.

of terms. Thus it was here. It became evident that what one expressed by one term another expressed by a different term. Gradually, however, οὐσία was retained for the essence of Deity, together with φύσις, expressing that which is common to the *modi subsistendi*; ὑπόστασις originally meaning that which stands beneath or below, came to be used for the existence forms of Deity, each ὑπόστασις having its own existence differentiated from the other. Much order was brought about in the confusion by Basilus in his letter περὶ οὐσίας καὶ ὑπόστασις. Though they differed from him somewhat in meaning, the two Gregories and John of Damascus followed him in usage.

In the West there was not as much confusion, but the great difficulty lay in harmonizing the meanings attaching to the Greek and to the Latin terminology. Through the influence of Tertullian, Latin usage became fairly well established. *Essentia* or *substantia* took the place of οὐσία and φύσις, *persona* or *subsistentia* were used for ὑπόστασις. No small amount of misunderstanding, however, arose between the East and the West. To the Greek mind the Latin terminology was not the equivalent of the Greek. *Substantia* came nearer expressing ὑπόστασις than οὐσία, and *persona* could be used better for πρόσωπον than for ὑπόστασις. But πρόσωπον had fallen into disrepute as indication of the existence modes of Trinity, since it might imply merely forms of manifestation and not of existence and therefore encourage the modalism of Sabellius. But for the Latins *substantia* could not be used to indicate ὑπόστασις, partly because it might lead to tritheism. The legal emphasis upon *persona* as used by Tertullian did perhaps for a time clear up some difficulties, but later applications

showed that a mere legalistic usage was not merely inadequate, but highly dangerous.¹⁸

The attempt on the part of the Council at Alexandria, 362, to dispel the mists of misunderstanding by determining the meaning of the term "person," was at least outwardly successful, but in how far East and West now really understood one another is problematical. Far from being mere philological or etymological quibbling this groping after proper expression indicated, just as in the ὁμο- and ὁμοιουσία controversy, profound differences in conceptions of the ontological Trinity. In Augustine the usage of *persona* to indicate the *modi subsistendi* is well established, though he quite rightly prefers to use *essentia* for οὐσία rather than *substantia*.¹⁹ Since it would be impossible to speak of *una essentia et tres substantiae*, the only course open was to speak of *tres personae*. But since *substantia* implied something

¹⁸ The question, in how far Tertullian emphasized the legal aspects of *persona*, is a debatable one. Harnack undoubtedly is extreme in his view. Hist. of Dogma, IV, 122, 3. Seeberg, Loofs and Schlossmann maintain that in its application to the Trinitarian dogma the legal meaning of *persona* is either absent or negligible. (Bavinck, Dogma, II, 303). And Servetus, De trinitatis erroribus, does not attach the legalistic tinge to *persona*, but goes back to πρόσωπον and ignoring later changes in meaning gives his own twist to Sabellian modalism of *personae* trinitates as modes of manifestation and not of existence. What Webb says concerning Mr. Bosanquet's view and his Hegelian legalistic association of *persona* (God and Personality, p. 52) is, to say the least, open to question.

¹⁹ Augustine. De Trin. especially VII. Not only because of the profundity of the subject, but also because of the way in which Augustine labors to express his ideas, now emphasizing one thing, now another, it is difficult and sometimes dangerous to generalize, as e.g. Harnack does, IV, 131. When it seems as though he goes to some extreme, it will usually be found that he is combatting some specific heresy. It is not quite fair to take one particular view as being the whole Augustine. One should rather ask what the particular antithesis is. Harnack's dictum: "he advanced in the direction of modalism," is therefore scarcely defensible, especially in the light of such passages as VII, 6:9.

which bore the attributes or qualities as accidents and such a contrast was inapplicable to God, essence and attribute being one in Him, *essentia* was the preferable designation of the Divine οὐσία.

During this struggle to arrive at such formulation of the Trinitarian dogma, not to explain it, but to guard it against possible misconceptions, the East emphasized the reality of the ὑπόστασις as over against Sabellianism, whereas the West, as over against Arianism insisted that the persons were not *tres substantiae*, *sed tres personae*.

Later further deliniation of the concept *persona* was necessary in the formulation of the Christological dogma, in refuting Nestorianism and Monophysitism, for a proper differentiation between *persona et natura*. Finally the definition of Boethius in the work ascribed to him "*de duabus naturis et una persona Christi*" was quite universally adopted: "*persona est naturae rationabilis individua substantia*." This included, therefore, independence and rationality or self-consciousness; or, as it is usually expressed, self-consciousness and self-control or self-direction. This however does not solve all difficulties, for competent theologians have always felt that this definition is more applicable to the Christological than to the Trinitarian dogma. Richard of St. Victor, e.g., severely criticized the Boethian conception. And Calvin preferred to speak of "*subsistentia in Dei essentia*."²⁰

In the dogma of the trinity, of whose controversies Pfeiderer says: ". . . they must not be judged, as a superficial view sometimes does judge them, to be quite meaningless,"²¹ *persona*, therefore, indicates that the three ὑποστάσεις of the Absolute Being are not modes of manifestation, but *modi existentiae*. The unity of essence

²⁰ Calvin, Inst., I, 13, '6. Bavinck, Dogm., II, 309.

²¹ Pfeiderer, Phil. of Rel., III, 249.

unfolds itself in a threefold existence. Absolute Being exists only as tripersonal because it is the absolute divine personality. If it be not misinterpreted, Absolute Being is indeed the Perfect Community.²²

Thus we see that historically the phrase "Personality of God" means that Deity existing in certain relations to Himself exists with His whole essence as each of the three Persons. The further doctrinal and dogmatic differentiations may, for the present purpose, remain in the *Locus de Trinitate*. I merely wish to contend that the correct understanding of the problem of Divine Personality in the setting of the last twenty-five years, and it is only with this that I am further concerned, is better served by considering these historical roots than by a leaping *in medias res* with a psychological analysis of human personality. The further content of the dogma as such I shall therefore leave untouched, for the present at least, and merely refer to it as occasion offers in connection with the questions of infinity and the Absolute.²³

That religious experience as we know it demands, implies and evidences personality in its object I hold to be incontestable. That the conception of a personal Deity as expressed in the Trinitarian dogma gives us a satisfactory basis for maintaining that the relation experienced in religion is personal, is, I think, perfectly defensible. That the personality of God in the historical sense does greater justice to the ultimate problem than the kaleidoscopic views of psychological analysis, is, I think, quite

²² Leighton, *Man and the Cosmos*, 499.

²³ For the historical development of the meaning of "person" as applied to Deity:

Trendelenburg, *History of the Word Person*.

Harnack, *History of Dogma*, Vol. IV.

Augustine, *De Trinitate*.

Bavinck, *Dogm.*, II.

Webb, *God and Personality*, Lectures 2 and 3.

plain. That a personal God does not at all imply a limited or a finite God is quite evident upon the basis of such an historical view. And, finally, that personality does not rob God of his absoluteness, according to the contention of certain contemporary thinkers, is, I think, evident when we attempt to answer *the* question of the philosophy of religion, which is not, "Is God?" but, "*What* is God?"

These ideas call for further treatment.

CHAPTER II

DIVINE PERSONALITY

AND

HUMAN PERSONALITY

First then, with this general historical conception as a background, can we still ascribe personality to Absolute Being after the modern discussions of the nature and limitations of human personality? Perhaps as good a point of departure as any, for our purpose, is Webb's admission, ". . . I should most certainly not hesitate to allow that if we may ascribe Personality to God, it must be only in a sense which will admit of a great difference between what we call Personality in ourselves and what for want of a better term, we call Personality in him."¹ Here again we meet the same problem referred to in the foregoing. If by Personality we cannot mean precisely the same thing in both instances, why use the same term for both? This is one of the instances in which we find ourselves confronted with the inescapable necessity of anthropomorphic conceptions. True, in our idea of Deity, we are to transcend anthropomorphism. But to lift one's self by one's bootstraps is infinitely simpler and easier than to divest one's self of one's own nature. As long as we remain human beings we think and must think as human beings. To demand that we shall, in our thought of Deity, escape the limitations of human thought and expression is

¹ God and Personality, 128.

not only demanding the impossible, but would virtually require that we cease thinking and speaking about Deity. Is not the designation of Deity as Absolute Idea anthropomorphic, just as well as the use of the terminology of personality? We must admit not only the inescapable character of this anthropomorphism, but also that with certain interpretations it is perfectly justifiable, if we are to speak or think of Deity at all. To transcend this completely would mean that not even "speaking with the tongues of angels" would suffice. Total escape would mean that we should have to *be* Deity.

Or, to use Bradleyan terminology, without necessarily indicating agreement with his views, we can know and speak of "Reality" only in terms of "Appearance" and still when we speak of "Reality" in terms of "Appearance," even the meanings of the term are "transmuted." Or, what can be said of the limited, the finite, the relative, can never be applied in precisely the same sense to the Absolute, and *vice versa*. If the objection be raised, "Then why not use terms for Absolute Being which are unique, without reference to finite being," the obvious answer, of course, is, that we must think and speak as human beings, or not at all. We may as well herein frankly admit our limitations. But to infer from this that consequently whatever we may say about Deity is fallacious does not follow. Our knowledge need not be adequate, in the sense of exhaustive, in order to be true. Granted that an adequate knowledge of any portion of reality requires complete knowledge of the whole of reality, it does not follow from the impossibility of the latter that partial or incomplete knowledge is false knowledge. Were that the case, the situation were hopeless. So here, always bearing in mind that terms cannot have precisely the same significance when applied to Absolute Being that they have when used of finite being, it does not follow that they therefore are

false. Inadequacy and fallacy are not identical. It is immediately recognized that, e.g., omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence differ not in degree but in kind, from knowledge, power, and spatial existence in finite being. So also, though we must admit that Personality ascribed to God must of necessity be different in kind, what of it? The difference between Absolute and finite being renders this inevitable. No reflective speculation can, I think, overcome this. To take refuge in the terms "super-personal," "super-personality," "over-self" does not solve the difficulty, but rather serves to becloud the issue.² As it seems to me, the problem in this connection is, therefore, as we know human personality, can we speak of Personality of God in any intelligible or defensible sense? Or, to put it the other way about, is there anything in our conception of human personality that would make it impossible for us to speak of such a personal God as is required and manifested by the religious experience? I think not.

Whatever differentia may be noted as between selfhood, individuality and personality, the characteristics of self-consciousness and self-control or self-direction are, undoubtedly, universally looked upon as belonging to the very nature of personality.³ And, surely, any worthy conception of Deity must include that He possesses personality in this sense. Though human personality be looked upon as the outcome of growth and development,⁴ and therefore a matter of degree, personality worthy of the name most assuredly implies self-consciousness. Again, however else one may distinguish between a person and an individual, an individual not possessed of self-direction would scarcely be called a person. So also a Deity im-

² Snaith, *Phil. of the Spirit*, p. 96.

³ Illingworth, *Personality*, 28, 38. Leighton, *Man and the Cosmos*. Rashdall, *Personality*, 379, 380.

⁴ Galloway, *Phil. of Rel.*, 493. Rashdall, *Personality*, 374, 375.

potent with respect to directing his own thought and activity certainly would not serve as a satisfactory answer to the central question, "What must God be?"

Whatever the genesis of consciousness may be, and however we may attempt to explain the development of self-consciousness, a "Philosophy of the 'Unconscious'" fails to account for man's rational and volitional nature. So also an unconscious, "blindly striving" (however that metaphor may be interpreted) World ground cannot account for the actual elements of our real experience. I would be even more emphatic than Leighton.⁵ "I can attach no definite meaning to the notion of an impersonal, all-inclusive spirit, conceived as the sufficient ground of reality and values." I can attach no meaning to it all. "We can only regard Hartmann's 'All-wise Unconscious' as a failure, a ghost with which philosophy and religion need not long detain themselves."⁶

In the swing of "actions and reactions," too much emphasis has at times been placed upon the element of consciousness. "Denn Ersteres (Bewusstsein) ist so oft und so ausschliesslich zum Factor der Persönlichkeit gemacht, dass diese nicht voll gefasst worden ist." "Persönlichkeit geht also als Ich gedanke, nicht, wie so viele wollen, in Selbstbewusstsein auf."⁷ But to think that consciousness exhausts the concept of personality is another indefensible extreme. Neither intellectualism nor voluntarism is the whole truth. The whole can never be adequately interpreted in terms of one of its parts. To take but one aspect of any unity, exalt that as the central and fundamental principle of its explanation, and force every other aspect to bow in humble submission to subordination, is an arbi-

⁵ *Man and the Cosmos*, 479.

⁶ Pfeiderer, *Phil. of Religion*, III, 283.

⁷ Rocholl, *Der Chr. Gottesbegriff*, 67, 68.

trary as well as an abstract procedure. I, as a person, am not mere consciousness, be this conceived of as "feeling" or "thinking" consciousness, or both. Nor am I mere striving. Whatever else may be recognized as belonging to the essential nature of my personality, surely both of these are constitutive.

So also, to conceive of Ultimate Being as mere thought or as Idea exclusively, is rather beside the truth. To deny consciousness to the Absolute Reality would render both God and all that is not God unintelligible. A world order, intelligible as well as moral, implies a conscious world ground. But a conscious world ground without "volition," would again be inconceivable. Here also, whatever else may be predicated of it, both consciousness (and consciousness at its apotheosis certainly implies self-consciousness) and self-direction must be ascribed to Ultimate Being. From this point of view there can, I think, be no objection to the view that Absolute Being is personal.

But, it is claimed, personality always implies an "other."⁸ There can be no "self" except as over against a "not-self." A person must also be an individual. Two possible implications are apparently contained in this. The first is that if Absolute Being is to be personal, some "other" is required.

Now, it undoubtedly is true that in man the awakening of personality is due to being confronted with the not-self,⁹ but even here existence is not due to antithesis. Consciousness does not necessarily at every point include self-consciousness. The "being" of personality does not necessarily depend upon contact with the "other." D'Arcy's

⁸ Rashdall, *Personality*, 371, 372.

⁹ Bavinck, *Geref. Dogm.*, II, 26.

answer to Rashdall is, I think, very much to the point.¹⁰ Knowledge of one's self as a person may be dependent upon relations to an "other," but is the essence of personality to be limited to knowledge? Even when "I" dissect myself, "I" am present at the operation not only, but "I" perform the task. The subject-self and the object-self may imply "otherness," but they are not separate entities. To think that I *am* merely what I know about myself, is undoubtedly to err. And to think that I as a person come into existence merely through being confronted with the "other," is also to err. Personality is developed but not created by "otherness." But given personality, we also have given "otherness." And can this now be said of Absolute Being? Undoubtedly it can. But in what sense? Does this imply that Absolute Being is personal, not with respect to Himself, but only with respect to an "other" distinguished from Himself? Or, in other words, must the "otherness" for Divine Personality be sought in the existence of the world? This seems to be the second implication. But is it true, that if "otherness" be required for personality this "otherness" must be the world? I think not. The infinite self-consciousness and self-direction of Absolute Being as a unity in an existence form is not dependent for its being upon an other in the sense of a not-self. The formal demand for "otherness" is adequately met in the idea that in the one essence of Absolute Being one *ὑπόστασις* is the "other" for another *ὑπόστασις*. If "otherness" is insisted upon as a necessity for personality, it is not necessary to seek that "otherness" in anything apart from Absolute Being itself. To conceive of personality in Absolute Being to be dependent upon "otherness" which must be "otherness" of finite being is a contradiction of the very meaning of

¹⁰ D'Arcy, *God and Freedom in Human Experience*, 100 ff.

Absolute. For surely, the concept of Absolute must include the idea of complete independence. A dependent Absolute is a contradiction. And the independent character of personality in Absolute Being is demanded by the very idea of Absolute. One *modus subsistendi* of Absolute Being, furnishes "otherness" in itself for another *modus subsistendi*. In theological terminology, the doctrine of the Trinity precludes the necessity of seeking the "other" in the world in order to maintain that God is personal. However one may interpret Hegel's well-known saying, "Ohne Welt ist Gott nicht Gott," it cannot, in any defensible sense, be taken to mean that personality in God is dependent upon the existence of the world as the foil of "otherness." If the demand of "otherness," therefore, be insisted upon, it finds answer in the Trinitarian conception of the ὑπόστασις of the essence of Absolute Being. Here the Lehrsätze from theology are significant. Let me, therefore refer to them; though the reference must be brief, lest I encounter the *odium Theologicum*.

Even at the risk of appearing dogmatic I shall merely state the conclusions which seem to me most tenable, (I do not say comprehensible), without lumbering this with historical detail, as *e.g.* the difference in conception between the Greek and Latin Fathers.

Essence, then, indicates that which is common to Absolute Being as such. Formally, essence is that which makes a thing what it is in distinction from all else that is. The essence of Deity, therefore, is that which makes God really God and differentiates Him from all that is not God. This essential being exists in threefold relation to itself. The mode of this existence in relation to itself gives the differentia of the three ὑποστάσεις. The distinction between Essence and Person in Deity is, therefore, that the Person is the way of existence of the being. The Divine essence is Father when thought of in its re-

lation to itself as Son. Differentiation between Essence and Person, or οὐσία and ὑπόστασις is one of *modus subsistendi*, but is nevertheless real. The totality of Being exists as each of the ὑποστάσεις.¹¹ Again, let further formulations and differentiations remain in the *Locus de Trinitate*. I merely borrow this bit, to indicate that there is "a more excellent way" than seeking the "otherness" for Absolute personality in relations to finite being, and thus losing the absolute character of Ultimate Being, making it dependent upon something other than itself. To deny personality to Absolute Being because of the demand which is made for "otherness," is, therefore, not only a fatal but an entirely unnecessary negation of the undeniable demand of religious experience. Fatal, for, as Galloway rightly maintains, if God be not personal, that is, a self-conscious and self-determining Being, religion is an illusion.¹² Unnecessary, for bearing in mind the inescapable minimum of anthropomorphism, the nature of human personality does not exhaust the meaning of personality as an ultimate conception. For just as it is true, that "the study of life at a level below that of personality will not suffice to solve the problem of personality itself,"¹³ so also it is true that the limitations of personality in finite being do not give us sufficient basis for denying that the Personality which religion demands exists in Absolute Being.

Here another problem presents itself. The religious experience, essentially in its every manifestation but more pronouncedly in its higher flights, whether in mystic ecstasy, self-denying devotion, or expressed in symbolic ritual, is fellowship with a personal Being. But can it now

¹¹ Bavinck, *Dogma*, II, 310-314.

¹² *Phil. of Religion*, 495.

¹³ Webb, *God and Personality*, 24.

be said that this Being is *a* Person? It would seem entirely reasonable to insist that personality can be predicated only of a person, but when it is attributed to Absolute Being the question arises, can we really speak of Absolute Being as *a* Person, in spite of the fact that religion demands this Being to be personal? Or, though we may be justified in speaking of personality *in* God, is it just as correct to speak of personality *of* God? Webb, who has produced most competent work upon the problem of divine personality, discusses this point in connection with the difference between Lotze and Mr. Bosanquet.¹⁴ When an attempt is made to compare Lotze's position, that personality can be ascribed to the Absolute, with Bosanquet's, that the Absolute is individual, but not personal, we, of course, are confronted with the problem of the relation between "the God of religion," and the philosophical Absolute. I shall scratch the surface of this later. But here all depends upon what we mean by God and what we mean by the Absolute. Keeping that problem in abeyance, and limiting the discussion to the extent to which we can ascribe personality to Deity, the problem is whether we can or cannot in any defensible sense speak of personality *of* God or must limit ourselves to personality *in* God. And in this province it is peculiarly true, *qui bene distinguit, bene docet*.

Webb is, perhaps, quite right in maintaining that in this form the problem has been discussed only within comparatively recent times. But, I think, this is true only in so far as this particular terminology and setting is concerned. Formaliter, yes, the problem of personality of God is new, but so far as the real content of the problem is concerned, it goes back much further than the formal pronouncement of the Racovian Catechism. Indeed, if

¹⁴ God and Personality, 52 ff. and Lectures 3 and 4.

we bear in mind the necessary emphasis required by the current antithesis, Augustine really put his finger precisely on the spot when he wrote, "Non enim aliud est Deus esse, aliud personam esse sed omnino idem."¹⁵ And he, of course, was by no means the first to ponder the question. When he uses the term "personam" he, quite naturally, must not be interpreted in the light of later Unitarian controversies. The antithesis was not, to exist as one person or as three persons, but to exist or not to exist as personal.

The crux lies, I think, in the comparison which Webb draws between Bosanquet's position and the contention of orthodox Trinitarian theology. These, according to Webb agree " . . . in finding Personality included within the nature of the Supreme Being but not predicable of it."¹⁶ But it is precisely this which is open to question.

One angle of approach is that of the problem of the relation between universal and particular. Even though it be held that with respect to Absolute Being such reasoning is merely a reasoning by analogy with all the dangerous pitfalls and ultimate unsatisfactoriness characteristic of this method, it nevertheless is significant and suggestive. While Augustine was quite right in his contention that with regard to Absolute Being we cannot properly speak of genus and species,¹⁷ *formaliter* our conception of the relation of universal to particular is of value and influence in this entire problem. What we find to be a common characteristic in all individuals, must, most assuredly be conceived of as belonging to the nature of the Universal. For sweet brevity's sake I omit everything pertaining to the psychological genesis of our universals,

¹⁵ De Trin., VII, 6.

¹⁶ God and Personality, 107.

¹⁷ De Trin., VII, 6.

as well as the historical differences in interpretation of their ultimate reality. Here, however, we find the idea of three hypostases of one οὐσία, and if each hypostasis be considered a particular, each manifesting the characteristic of personality, each being an existence form of the essence or being, then surely there can be no formal objection to ascribing to the essence that which each existence-mode manifests. The Universal possesses that which the particulars have in common. Of course the nominalist would maintain that in this particular problem no reality corresponds to what we conceive the particulars to have in common. To hold therefore that it is permissible to speak of personality *in* God but not *of* God, is, from this point of view, distinctly nominalistic. The extreme realist, on the other hand, insisting that a personal God must be but *a*, or *one* person, is a fullblown modalist.

But, if we insist that rationality is a fundamental characteristic of each human being, what except an indefensible nominalism prevents us from ascribing rationality to "mankind?" But this would not imply that "mankind" though being "rational" is also "reason."

So too, if we admit that personality in the sense used throughout this discussion is a real characteristic of each hypostasis of Absolute Being, we most assuredly can go further than admitting personality merely *in* Deity, without implying that Deity is merely *a* Person. In other words, to speak of a personal God, including in that the idea of personality *of* God, does not necessarily imply that the Essence exists in but one hypostasis. Merely from this one point of view personality in the sense of possessing self-consciousness and self-direction, characteristic of each hypostasis and distinguished from the proprieties

of *paternitas, filiatio et processio* not only can, but has been predicated of the essence of Absolute Being.¹⁸

Indeed, it belongs to the very essence of Absolute Being to exist as personal. The οὐσία exists only as ὑποστάσεις. If personality be conceived of as not being predicable of the οὐσία, then, of course, the entire view concerning the relation between οὐσία and ὑπόστασις must be changed.

So another approach to this problem is the theological one of the relation of essence and person on the one hand, but on the other the relation between essence and attributes. Again running the risk of the appearance of dogmatism, I merely state that the theologian holds that each attribute *is* the essence. Or, in the words of *the* metaphysician of the New Testament, for such, I think, we must consider St. John, and not St. Paul, to be, "God *is* love." That is not "merely" theology, but the only defensible metaphysics. In God all His attributes are identical with His essence. To say, therefore, that personality is an attribute of the hypostases and not of the essence, and that consequently we may perhaps, speak of personality *in* God, but not *of* God, is an indefensible view of the relation between essence and attribute.¹⁹ Here is another valuable "Lehnsatz." The subject matter of this distinction within the problem is, therefore, not at all new, even though the particular form in which it is now presented is comparatively recent. Webb undoubtedly performed a distinct service in calling attention to this rather sharp differentiation, but it would seem in the light of historical contributions, from the time of Irenaeus on, that the distinction is merely a new formulation of an old problem.

In this connection one more point requires attention.

¹⁸ Bavinck, Dogm., II, 311 ff.

¹⁹ Bavinck, Dogm., II, 100 ff. and literature noted.

Though closely related to the problem of the necessity of "otherness" for personality, this question is not quite identical. Is God to be conceived of as personal only if personal relations exist between Him and man? This seems to be Webb's view. ". . . only so far as personal relations are allowed to exist between the worshipper and his God can that God be properly described as personal."²⁰ This is true if we take it to mean that divine personality can not be maintained by those who deny the reality of personal relations in the religious experience. If we deny that there is any such element as personal relation between man and the object of his religious devotion, of course the problem becomes one of interpretation and explanation of the religious experience, rather than one of a metaphysical inquiry into the nature of Deity. The problem then is not: What is God? but: what is religion?

But if this means that the ontological existence of divine personality depends upon personal relation between God and man, it undoubtedly is erroneous. "Pretty is as pretty does" is one of the many popular untruths. The nature of being is not determined by the nature of activity, but *vice versa*. How a thing acts depends upon what it is. The possibility of existing in certain relations depends upon the nature of that which does thus exist in those relations. Spatial relations are possible only between those things which exist in a spatial order. Being is fundamental to doing. Not only is it true of man, that what he does depends upon what he is, but it is equally true of all existents. An acid, for example, acts as it does because it is what it is. The nature of its being determines the nature of its action. To hold that essence is more fundamental than relation does not necessarily imply the doctrine of the unreality of relations, but it is, I think, more

²⁰ God and Personality, p. 11.

true than the position that would make being dependent upon relations. Ultimately, God is not personal because of this element in religious experience, but in religion personal relation is possible because God is personal. It is not the entering into relations with man that makes God personal, but He is personal even when thought of apart from this. It is, in final analysis, not the phenomenology of religious experience that satisfies the metaphysical demand, however important that phenomenology may be. Here also the fundamental characteristics of the experience are determined by or grounded in the nature of the subject on the one hand, but above all of the object of that experience. Personality in the object of religious experience is primary and furnishes the possibility of the unique experience of religion. But this does not imply that, to put it crudely and entirely inadequately, Deity would cease to be personal, should religion vanish, or should the element of personal relation cease. Absolute Being would still remain personal. Augustine was quite right, "for to God it is not one thing to be, another to be a person, but it is absolutely the same thing." ". . . it is the same thing to Him to be as to be a person."²¹

This is what theology has always meant when it insisted that the ontological Trinity is the basis of the œconomical trinity, and metaphysically this is, I think, the only defensible view. The ultimate nature of personality of Deity must be sought in the very nature of Absolute Being.

Another consideration leads to the same conclusion. The personal relation which characterizes the religious experience is in the very nature of the case temporal in character, since man cannot escape the temporal existence-mode. But to make the personality of Deity dependent

²¹ De Trin., VII, 6.

upon the temporal character of the experience of finite being, is a negation of the eternal existence-mode of Absolute Being, and is an indefensible metaphysics of the relation between time and eternity. The proper metaphysical conception of eternity as an existence-mode of Absolute Being implies I think, that the existence of personality in Absolute Being is in no way dependent upon personality in finite being. Certain aspects of this I shall touch upon in connection with the problem of a finite God. Here I shall develop what seems to me to be the proper conception of the existence-mode of Absolute Being in its relation to that of finite being in so far as all that is finite is limited to a temporal order. This requires at least some account of the ultimate nature of time.

"Quid est ergo tempus? Si nemo ex me quaerat, scio; si quaerenti explicare velim, nescio; findenter tamen dico, scire me. Quod si nihil praeteriret, non esset praeteritum tempus, et si nihil adveniret, non esset futurum tempus, et si nihil esset, non esset praesens tempus."²²

Differences of opinion, which is, alas, but too often mere opinion, as to what time is, are legion. But there are at least a few points upon which thinkers, with a few negligible exceptions, are agreed. Time is not a *reale quid*. It is not a thing, as the so-many-eth thing existing next to and in common with the so-many-other things. It is not an entity having independent existence. It is not a peculiar kind of receptacle, the complement of a fellow-receptacle, called space, which together hold all other things in their all-enveloping embrace without being in turn embraced by something else.

But apart from these, and other, points of general agreement, one of the outstanding points of difference is the problem of the subjectivity or the objectivity of time.

²² Augustine, Confessiones XI, 14.

And the position one takes with respect to this controversy has great importance for one's conception of the relation, or lack of relation, between time and eternity. Kant has masterly proclaimed the subjectivity of time, and strength as well as dignity has been added to his pronouncement by the whole Idealistic Succession. But without denying the subjective element in the so-called perception of time, need one necessarily subscribe to the proposition that time is *only* a subjective form of perception? I think not.

Does that which exists, exist under the form of time, or do we merely perceive it under the form of time? However, as soon as we assert that we see existence under the form of time,²³ is the form of time to be attributed to existence as such, or merely to the *seeing* of existence? Apart from material considerations, here is a formal difficulty. If the mind is content to rest in a merely subjective time, which is nothing more than a subjective, *a priori* form of perception, *bene*. But not all minds are satisfied with such temporal self-sufficiency. The formal difficulty here is identical with that which occasioned the controversial storm centering about Spinoza's definition of Attribute: *id quod intellectus de substantia percipit, tanquam eiusdem essentiam constituens*.²⁴ If the emphasis be placed upon the first clause of the definition, it would seem that attributes are but the subjective conceptions of the mind. If the second clause receive the emphasis, it would argue for the objective, real existence of the attributes independent of the activity of the mind. Does the mind perceive the attribute that *is* the essence of the substance, or does the mind perceive the attribute *as if* it were the essence of substance without its really being so?

Likewise, if we see existence under the form of time,

²³ McTaggart, *Mind*, 1909, pp. 343-362.

²⁴ Spinoza, *Ethics*.

as McTaggart says, does time apply to the existence which is perceived, or merely to the perceiving itself? If time, then, be nothing more than a form of perception, it cannot properly be said to belong to that which is perceived. True, there is a sense in which we can speak of time as a form of perception, but only because time is a form or mode of existence.

Objects exist, independent of our perception of them. Admitted that their existence *qua* objects requires a relation to a subject, this does not mean that their existence as entities is dependent upon perception. Idealism aside, to make their existence apart from our perception a matter of Divine perception, *a la* Berkeley, is in this connection a wholly unnecessary and indefensible feat of anthropomorphism. We perceive objects. The temporal element of the perceptual form and process is possible because of the temporal form of existence of things. We can perceive under the form of time (and this can be said of space also), because we, as well as the perceived objects, *exist* under the form of time. Time is not a mere form of perception, but a mode of existence, an existence-form. With this the subjective element in the perception of time is not denied, but merely that time is *only* subjective, or a *mere* form of perception. We can perceive objects *sub specie temporis* because they exist *sub specie temporis*. Time is the form or mode of existence of all that is finite.²⁵

In common with all fundamental concepts, the concept of eternity has many interpretations. These are, for the sake of convenience, often grouped into three types:

(1) Eternity is an unending extent or duration of time.

²⁵ Bavinck, *Wysb. der Openb.*, 75 ff.; Bavinck, *Dogm.*, II, 152. Lindsay, *Theistic Idealism*, 185.

(2) Eternity is that which is essentially timeless, as we speak of the timelessness of truths, including sometimes a conception of a timeless existence.

(3) Eternity is that which includes time, but somehow transcends it.²⁶

The first is of course the popular, and mistaken, conception. In *mente populi* Eternity is thought of as infinitely extended time. Graphically presented, time and eternity would be two lines; the line of time would be finite in length, the line of eternity would be extended not merely indefinitely but infinitely at both ends. Or, speaking in other indefensible contradictions, that part of infinite time that lies in an inconceivably remote past would form a sort of past eternity, and that part of infinite time that extends beyond the unbridled grasp of wildest imagination in the future would form a sort of future eternity, while *now* there is no eternity, but only time. The only difference then is a quantitative one. But, fundamentally, this naive idea of eternity as infinite time is upon the same level as speaking of wooden iron. Time and eternity are each *sui generis*. They are incommensurables, with not a quantitative, but a qualitative difference. *Non sunt mensurae unius generis.*²⁷ Time is the form or mode of existence of finite being. Eternity is the mode of existence of Absolute Being, and can, in the strictest sense of the term, be predicated only of God.

To speak of eternity as timelessness in the sense of an everlasting *now*, is, of course, pure metaphor. The now has meaning only with reference to past and future, whether one have the "razor-edge" or "saddle-back" conception of a present, accept the Bergsonian "duration" or

²⁶ Pringle-Pattison, *Idea of God*, 242. McTaggart, *Mind*, 1909, 343 ff.

²⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Bavinck*, *Dogm.*, II, 452, ff.

the "duration" of Whitehead.²⁸ And the eternal admits of no now, in contrast with past and future. Let the idea of eternity as a changeless now continue to exist and be used as a poetic metaphor, it has no place in careful thought. Strictly speaking, eternity excludes *principium, finem et successionem*, and it is only with reference to these that we can speak of a now.

Nor can we rightly conceive of eternity as being the immanent cause of time. This is, indeed, an inescapable conclusion upon the pantheistic conception of the relation of God and world as *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*. But only upon the basis of such pantheism can this conception be defended. Eternity is not the immanent cause, but rather the ground of time. Equally indefensible, of course, is the idea of Strauss: "Ewigkeit und Zeit verhalten sich wie die Substantz und ihre Accidenzien."²⁹ This also denies the essential difference, and is based upon the same identification of Absolute Being and finite being, without recognizing the absolute difference in essence, and therefore the essentially, and not quantitatively, different mode of existence of the two.

So also, to speak of eternity as timelessness, in the sense of the timelessness of truths, is also speaking in metaphorical language. If the proper distinctions be made, we can of course speak of eternal or timeless truths. Were this not so, we could not conceive of anything but relative, even fluctuating, fleeting, illusory truths, which would, *per se*, cease to be true. But again, in the strictest sense of the term, we can speak of eternal truths only with respect to their archetypal existence *in mente Dei*. As soon as we refer to their ectypal existence *in mente hominis seu in creatione*, they are inseparably bound up

²⁸ Whitehead, *Concept of Nature*, 53 ff.

²⁹ D. F. Strauss, *Chr. Glaubenslehre*, I, 562.

with the existence of the universe, and though in a sense transcending time, namely in their being true throughout the passage of time, they exist *in tempore*. The so-called timelessness of eternity must, therefore, be of a different nature than the so-called timelessness of truth.

Nor should eternity be thought of as timelessness in the sense of a merely negative form of the non-temporal.³⁰ Such a negative is both inconceivable and unsatisfying. Just as infinite is not a negative but a positive idea when applied to God, so eternity is not a mere negation of the temporal, but has a positive meaning. For, as with the *infinitas Dei*, not an *infinitas magnitudinis* nor an *infinitas multitudinis* is meant, but an *infinitas essentiae*, as a positive perfectio, so with eternity not a mere absence of the temporal is expressed, but the positive mode of existence of Absolute Being.³¹ Bare absence of time, with no positive character, would be of course but a very formal and negative eternity.

The old distinction between *tempus extrinsecum* and *tempus intrinsecum* is indeed fruitful for the discussion of the problem of the relation between time and eternity, time and change, time and motion. Extrinsic time is then the norm according to which we measure motion. In this sense it can be said that time is the measure of change and motion.³²

Tempus intrinsecum is the existence-form of things, through which, or according to which they have past, present and future, as an internal durational existence-form measurable by the parts distinguishable in it. This, which might perhaps be called real time, is not something apart from the cosmos, but is the mode of being of the cosmos,

³⁰ Lindsay, *op. cit.*

³¹ Bavinck, *Dogm.*, II, 149.

³² Thomas Aquinas.

to be distinguished from a measurable, serial, quantitative time.

The essence of time in general, therefore, is not that it is a *parte ante* or a *parte post* either finite or infinite, but that as an existence-form it contains a succession of moments. If it be construed correctly, it might almost be said that time is the universe as it exists in the successional order. *Tempus intrinsecum* is the being-form of all that is finite. Time is then not a *reale quid*, not an entity, nor a mere subjective form of perception, but a way in which all finite being exists, and is proper only to finite and not to Infinite Being. And eternity, not as an immobile moment of time, but as a positive way of being, can be attributed only to Absolute Being. Some confusion is found in McTaggart, when he asserts that the time series is a series of representations of timeless reality, that timeless reality is the last stage of a series, and that Eternal can be rightly regarded as future if time is unreal, if the series which appears to us as a time series is a series of representations arranged according to adequacy, etc.³³ This lack of clear-cut differentiation is also evident in Pringle-Pattison, who tries to conceive of eternity in terms of purpose. "The eternal view of a time process is not the view of all its stages simultaneously, but the view of them as elements or members of a completed purpose." And only upon the basis of a frank admission that the Absolute and God cannot be identified, can he say: "The time-process is retained in the Absolute and yet transcended."³⁴ But this also necessarily involves an implicit admission that eternity is not applicable to the Absolute. Apparently, however, he is not quite ready to make this admission, in view of his retraction, which ultimately is merely an ap-

³³ Op. cit.

³⁴ Pringle-Pattison, *Idea of God*, 358.

parent and not a real retraction: "We must conceive the temporal process as a necessary condition of existence of partial minds. Time (and space) are to be regarded, in short, as the *principia individuationis*, the forms of finite individuation, but as somehow transcended in the ultimate experience on which we depend."³⁵

The conception of time as the necessary mode of existence of all finite being, and of that only, and eternity as the existence-form of the Absolute, Infinite Being only, avoids all such confusion and contradictions.

The *pièce de résistance* of the metaphysics of time and eternity is, of course, the question whether the world had a beginning or is eternal. This however, loses most of its terrors when viewed in the light of the distinctions already drawn. Therefore, it needs but brief treatment. The well-known antinomy of Kant is as good a point of departure as any: the world must have had a beginning since endless past time is unthinkable, and yet the world could have had no beginning, because empty time is unthinkable. Now it is undoubtedly true that both endless past time and empty time are unthinkable. Endless time is really a contradiction. Even though we attempt, wrongly, to think of time as the sum total of an infinite number of discrete parts, the sum of finite parts, however many they may be, never gives infinity. Also the mistaken effort to present time to our minds under the figure of a line, involves the same difficulties. But the idea of time as a necessary existence-form, with its correlative idea of a continuum of being as opposed to the summation of discrete units, avoids this difficulty. Empty time then also loses its terrors, for the simple reason that there is no necessity for entertaining such a figment even in the imagination. Time is no receptacle, which is either filled or

³⁵ Idem, 365.

empty, and has independent existence apart from content. A temporal vacuum has no being.

The last member of the antinomy, therefore, has no force, since with the world also time disappears. Without the existence of the world, there is no time, and hence no empty time. This is also implicitly involved in Lotze's statement: "Time in itself . . . excludes every attribute which would have to be supposed to belong to it, if it had an independent existence prior to other existence."³⁶ Were there time prior to the coming into existence of the world, we would indeed be confronted with the specter of empty time. But since time is to be considered the way of being proper to the finite, and not a something, a *reale quid*, existing independently, apart from the very being of the finite, there simply is no time before "in the beginning." "There ain't no sech animile" as time *before* the existence or coming into being of the world. Time cannot be posited prior to the world.

Consequently, only the first member of the antinomy holds. The world must have had a beginning. That we cannot form an adequate conception of this, is no real or valid objection, since we, existing in the time-form, are also in our thinking bound to the time-form. To think time away while still our thoughts be conceived to exist, would really involve thinking thought away, which is impossible.³⁷

This, naturally, gives occasion for the question, — "Could God then not have created the world from eternity?" This question is but another form of the error of confusing or identifying time and eternity. Even apart from the Neo-Platonic idea of emanation, the idea of an eternal creation is an impossible conception. In eternity

³⁶ Lotze, *Metaphysics*, 242.

³⁷ Bavinck, *Dogm.*, II, 451.

there is no sooner or later. Only in this sense can it be said that God created the world eternally without it being an eternal creation, that in the moment the world received its existence, God remained eternal and created as the Eternal One, without ceasing to be the Eternal, or going over into the existence-form of creation. The eternal cannot be conceived of as passing over, ontologically, into the temporal, but this does not deny the possibility of a functional relation to the temporal process.

Upon the basis of time being the existence-form of the world, Augustine could say: "Mundus non est factus in tempore, sed cum tempore."³⁸ Herein he but echoed Plato, Philo and Tertullian. Time, as an existence-form was not created, but co-created. Only in this sense then can it be said that the world always has been, that is, so long as time has been, but this does not mean an eternal existence, either in the sense of time infinitely extended *a parte ante*, or in the sense of eternity as applicable only to Absolute Being. The question, why the world was created when it was, is not a legitimate question, for there was no "when." "When" came into existence with the world, so that in the strictest sense there is no *before* creation.

This also means that the question of idle curiosity, as to what God then did before creation, is not legitimate. On the one hand, a recognition of an essential, qualitative difference between time and eternity avoids the difficulty of an impossible before-creation-eternal-time, and on the other hand, the idea of a *Deus otiosus* is adequately met by the doctrine of the Trinity.

The implication of this metaphysical conception of eternity as the existence-mode of Absolute Being for the problem of divine personality is, it seems to me, this. The

³⁸ Conf., XI. 12.

category of time is inapplicable to Absolute Being. By its very absoluteness Absolute Being is not dependent upon either time or anything existing in temporal relations or a temporal order. If, now, personality is not a function of Absolute Being, but belongs to its very nature, it then also partakes of that existence form which differs essentially from the temporal. It, therefore, is not dependent for its existence upon any relation upon which it may enter with finite being, which, also in its experience, exists in a time order. An eternal existence-mode is not contingent, and personality as characteristic of eternal Being, cannot be contingent upon personal relations in religious experience of finite being. To make the metaphysical personality of Absolute Being depend upon certain characteristics of human experience is undoubtedly erroneous. I would, therefore, rather say that the element of personal relation in religion is possible because Eternal Being is in itself personal and can enter into functional relation to the temporal without ceasing to be Eternal. Indeed, just because Absolute Being is eternal in the sense developed above, ontologically personality can be ascribed to God as He exists in Himself. Or, in theological terminology, the ontological Trinity is primary and furnishes us with the possibility of the undeniable element of reciprocal personal relations in the religious experience. The Eternal is not rendered personal because of temporal experience, but religious experience of temporal being is rendered possible because the Eternal is personal.

This same trend of thought is, I think, significant for the next question which naturally presents itself. If God is personal, can He then still be infinite, or must a personal God of necessity be a finite or a limited God? To this problem of personality and infinity I next turn.

CHAPTER III.

DIVINE PERSONALITY AND INFINITY

The problem of divine personality and infinity is closely linked up with that of God and the philosophical Absolute, but at least from a formal point of view the two questions are not quite identical. It may be that the solution we offer for the one problem will determine the direction in which we seek the solution of the other, but this does not imply that the problems are not distinct. On the other hand, the close dependence of the one upon the other may require anticipation of certain aspects of the second in the discussion of the first. Since, however, my main concern at present is to investigate the possibility of maintaining that personality of Deity demanded and attested to by the religious experience upon the basis of valid metaphysical conceptions, I prefer to treat the problem of personality and infinity separately, at least in so far as this is possible, and leave the problem of God and Absolute for separate treatment.

Here two angles of approach seem to suggest themselves. If God be personal, can He then still be conceived of as infinite? If it be true according to Fichtean dogma, for dogma I conceive it to be, that personality is limitation, are we then confronted with the dilemma of either accepting the doctrine of a limited God or denying the personality of God? The second approach is indicated by the question, if God be personal can he still be considered omnipotent, especially from the point of view of the problem of evil?

Of late years several competent thinkers have attempted to answer these questions by advocating the doctrine of a finite, limited, non-omnipotent God. But is it necessary to take refuge in such a "Gottesbegriff," which without a doubt, violates every demand of the religious consciousness with respect to the nature of its object? Does the nature of personality, as that term is predicable of Absolute Being, demand that we must relinquish the idea of infinity of Deity? I think not. Though Bradley may insist, "A person . . . to me must be finite, or must cease to be personal,"¹ it does not follow that a personal God must be finite God in any defensible sense of the word. For, on the one hand, as we have seen, the doctrine of a personal God does not imply that God is *a* person. Personality in the sense of self-consciousness and self-direction of the ὑπόστασις as existence-mode of Absolute Being, does not, so far as I can see, demand finitude in any sense. Again, if infinity be predicable of Absolute Being, or be essential to its very nature, it follows that, given the entire essence to exist in any given hypostasis, infinity is also predicable of that hypostasis. Or, to paraphrase Augustine's well-known saying, for Absolute Being it is not one thing to be, and another to be infinite.

However, no satisfactory attempt to solve this problem can be made unless we know precisely, not what we perhaps ordinarily *do*, but what we *can* mean by infinity when predicated of Absolute Being who is at the same time personal. And it is just at this point, I think, that one of the greatest weaknesses of any doctrine of a finite God is to be found. In spite of the brilliant dialectic of McTaggart, in "Some Dogmas of Religion," the lucid exposition of Rashdall in "Personal Idealism," and "Con-

¹ Essays, 449.

tentio Veritatis," and the scientific temper of Alexander in "Space, Time and Deity," there seems to be quite universal confusion as to the actual meaning of infinity as it *can* be used with respect to Deity. Before linking it up with the problem of personality, let me attempt to clarify this situation somewhat.

As is the case with "eternity," so also "infinity" covers a multitude of meanings in ordinary usage. It is immediately evident, however, that with respect to Deity every element of spatial meaning or analogy must be barred from the concept infinite. Of course it is not quite fair to attach a spatial significance to every application of the term "finite" to Deity, especially when this is done by such meticulous thinkers as Bradley, McTaggart and Rashdall, but when one persistently speaks of the relation of God to man as being immanent or *external*, and of an *external* God,² all right to serious consideration of further argument is forfeited, so far as discussion of the metaphysical relation of Deity is concerned. But it seems as though competent thinkers have not altogether escaped the taint of spatial conceptions in speaking of the infinity or finitude of Absolute Being. Without here entering upon the problem of Transcendence and Immanence, I wish merely to remark that even among the most careful thinkers one rarely meets any discussion of either Transcendence or Infinity that does not still suffer from the old spatial analogy. To find quite universally, for example, serious discussions of Theism in terms of Deism, is, to say the least, extremely annoying.

The point I wish to emphasize here is that any discussion of infinity or finitude of Deity must cast off definitely and absolutely all spatial conceptions. As time is one of the necessary existence modes of finite being, so

² Wright, *A Student's Philosophy of Religion*, 370 ff.

space is the other. All that has previously been said about the nature of time can, *mutatis mutandis*, be said about the nature of space, with, of course, the immediate and most important implication that the category of space is in no way applicable to Absolute Being. To speak of an Infinite God, therefore, in the sense of an infinitely extended God, or of a finite God, in the sense of a spatially limited God, is nonsense. From this point of view all discussion of the necessity of a "finite" God because of the character of personality, if this be construed as being in any way at all related to the spatial category, can immediately be ruled out of court as being entirely irrelevant. Careful thinkers cannot mean, when they argue that since in man personality is always finite, or that a human person is finite, and therefore a personal God must also be finite, that this means finite with respect to space or spatial relations. Of course, here we again meet the familiar difficulty of the limitations of human thought and expression. For a human person *is* spatially limited. Human personality, in so far as this is predicated of a being existing in spatial relations, can be said to be finite. Naturally, the old distinctions of *locus extrinsicus* and *locus intrinsicus*, and of *ubi repletivum*, *ubi circumscriptivum* and *ubi definitum*³ are extremely suggestive for the problem of the relation between human personality and existence in spatial relations. But these, again, are inapplicable to Absolute Being. The existence-mode of Absolute Being is essentially different than that of finite being. If we were bound to what personality can mean when applied to finite being, we could not use the term in reference to Absolute Being. Bearing in mind, however, that with respect to "infinite" and "finite" "There is a positive difference, a difference furthermore, in kind as

³ F. M. Ten Hoor, *Compendium der Geref. Dogm.*, 45.

well as in degree,"⁴ no refuge need be taken in a "finite" God to satisfy the requirements of analogy to personality of finite being existing in a spatial order. Whatever else may or may not be meant by "personality is limitation," in this connection the last enemy of spatial analogy must be overcome.

Just here, I think, lies one of the fundamental fallacies of Alexander's conception of Deity.⁵ Even apart from his application of the spatial category to God, his conception of what constitutes deity is, to say the least, unique. "Deity is the next higher empirical quality to the highest we know."⁶ It is indeed difficult to understand how a quality higher than the highest we know can still be empirical. A valid inference would be that as soon as we get to know that quality it ceases to be deity, an inference which Alexander himself frankly makes in discussing what constitutes deity for different levels of existence. But this aside. Due, undoubtedly to his conception of Space-Time, Alexander often speaks of the universe as the "body" of God, always careful to put the term in inverted comma's. "God is the whole world as possessing the quality of deity. . . . Of such a being the whole world is the 'body' and deity is the mind."⁷ "God's deity is lodged in a portion of his 'body' and this body is infinite."⁸ And when he discusses the problem of immanence and transcendence⁹ he continually applies the category of space, and his conclusion is typical of his Space-Time conception: "God is immanent in respect to his body, but transcendent in respect of his

⁴ Wenley, *Contemporary Theology*, 181.

⁵ *Space, Time and Deity*.

⁶ *Idem*, II, 345.

⁷ *S-T. and Deity*, II, 353.

⁸ *Idem*, II, 357.

⁹ *Idem*, II, 390-396.

deity.”¹⁰ With the confusion, so typically universal, between Deism and Theism he says of the latter, “For God is for it a being not caught in the machinery of the world, but a spectator who directs from without,”¹¹ which is, of course, far from being the theistic view.

I cite this merely as one of the most recent examples of speculative thought concerning God which still is guilty of the old fallacy of thinking that God can be conceived of in terms of space. Once this idea is resolutely and completely banished it is self-evident that the idea of a God finite in any spatial sense whatsoever cannot for a moment be entertained.

Some interesting applications of the “new” infinite of mathematical speculation to the problem of infinity of Deity have been made in recent years. Considerable impetus was given to this by Royce.¹² I quite agree with Leighton, however, that “it does not solve the problem of the actual infinite in the sense of the reality of self-completeness or perfection.”¹³ The application of mathematical concepts to metaphysical problems does not answer ultimate questions. As the advances in theoretical clarification of mathematical space can give no solution of the metaphysical problem of the ultimate reality of space, or its relation to Absolute Being, so the development of the “new” infinite with respect to the number-series by Cantor, Dedekind, Russell, and others, cannot hope to give satisfactory answer to the metaphysical problem. Infinity as applicable to Absolute Being is not an infinity of a numerical series, any more than it is an infinity of spatial extent and has never been conceived thus by real

¹⁰ *Idem*, II, 396.

¹¹ *Idem*, II, 399.

¹² *The World and the Individual*, Vol. I, Supplementary essay.

¹³ *Man and the Cosmos*, 481.

thinkers. Jourdain is quite right when he says:¹⁴ "A mathematical and a metaphysical problem are not, then, problems of the same kind to be solved by the same method; nor is the conception of the mathematical Absolute reached in the same way as that of the metaphysical Absolute." Though it may be suggestive so far as analogy is concerned, as an explanation of the problem Keyser's attempt to interpret the infinity of Deity in terms of the "new" mathematical infinite entirely misses the point. Since mathematical speculation is not the proper "principium" in the field of ultimate questions, Dotterer¹⁵ is undoubtedly right in maintaining ". . . the 'discovery' of the New Infinite leaves the problems of theology exactly as it found them," but this in no wise means that a finite God is all that is left for us.¹⁶

This does not mean that all efforts to interpret infinity of Absolute Being in terms of the "new" mathematical infinite are entirely without value. They can, of course, lay no valid claim to having solved the metaphysical question, but their value lies in their suggestiveness, as, for example, in showing that with regard to personality of infinite Being we need no longer be frightened by the bugbear of subtracting the finite from the infinite and having the Infinite lose some of its infinity. In other words, while on the one hand modern thought upon mathematical infinity does not bring us a step further in the problem of the metaphysical nature of Ultimate Being it does show that the old objections against the conception of an infinite Being are entirely groundless. Therefore, though this does not give a positive solution of Infinity as an attribute of Absolute Being not in con-

¹⁴ On the Theory of the Infinite in Modern Thought, p. 29.

¹⁵ The Argument for a Finitist Theology, 68.

¹⁶ Idem, 71 ff.

flict with personality, it does, negatively, imply that it is entirely unnecessary, as well as upon other grounds indefensible and essentially irreligious, to take refuge in the idea of a finite God.

The point at issue, however, is that in speaking of Absolute Being, to apply either the method or the categories of mathematics is just as absurd and impossible as applying the moral categories to the movements of electrons and spiral nebulae.

Here another "Lehnsatz" from theology is illuminating.¹⁷ With respect to God infinity is not a negative but a positive concept, essentially implying that God as Absolute Being is not defined or limited by anything finite. This denial of limitation is possible in more ways than one. If we mean *Deus non tempore finire potest*, then *infinitas* is the same as *aeternitas*. If we mean *Deus non loco finire potest*, *infinitas* means *omnipraesentia*. Metaphysically this implies, of course, that the nature of Absolute Being is such that the categories of time and space are inapplicable, and this is precisely what we have been contending. But *infinitas* may also mean that each attribute of God is present in Him in an absolute way, and then infinity is equivalent to perfection. *Infinitas Dei non est infinitas magnitudinis, non est infinitas multitudinis, sed infinitas essentiae*. Infinity is perfection in an intensive, qualitative positive sense.¹⁸ Or, as Leighton puts it, one meaning of the term is, "the infinite as the perfect or self-complete, as including all forms of values in the highest degree possible. In this, which is peculiarly the metaphysical meaning of the infinite there can be of course only one infinite, the absolute reality or ground of the universe in its unity and totality."¹⁹

¹⁷ Bavinck, Dogm., II, 149 ff.

¹⁸ Bavinck, Dogm., II, 150.

¹⁹ Man and the Cosmos, 480.

How, then, personality is in conflict with this conception of infinity, it is quite impossible to see. Personality and infinity, as the terms can properly be applied to God certainly are not incompatible. A personal God does not at all imply a finite God in any sense of the term.

But there is still another aspect to the problem. Even though we admit that infinity is an infinity of perfection, and not of extent or multitude, are we even so not forced to conceive of Deity as limited, in the sense that the Cosmos, or finite spirits, or whatever other term we wish to use in designating that which is not-God, depending upon our metaphysical position, has being apart from the being of God, so that the being of Deity does not include all existence? Is the Universal Spirit not limited by the very existence of finite spirits? Rashdall answers in the affirmative. "God is certainly limited by all other beings in the universe, that is to say, by other selves, in so far as He is not those selves. He is not limited as I hold, by anything which does not ultimately proceed from his own nature or will, or power. That power is doubtless limited, and in the frank admission of this limitation of power lies the only solution of the problem of evil which does not either destroy the goodness of God or destroy moral distinctions altogether. He is limited by his own eternal, if you like, 'necessary' nature, a nature which wills eternally the best which that nature has in it to create. The limitation therefore is what theologians have often called a self-limitation; provided only that this limitation must not be regarded as an arbitrary self-limitation but as arising from the presence of that idea of the best that is eternally present to a will whose potentialities are limited."²⁰ But this is really a confusion of two problems. The first is the problem of the relation between

²⁰ *Personal Idealism*, 390, 391.

the existence of God and the existence of the universe. The second is the problem of omnipotence. And with respect to the first it would seem as though Rashdall really contradicts himself. For, if anything ultimately proceeds from His nature, will or power, or in other words, has the ground of its being in the being of the Infinite, in what intelligible sense can we then still maintain that the Infinite is limited? This would not only smack too much of the fallacy of spatial analogy, but would imply an indefensible dualism of God and the world. Watson is much nearer the truth. ". . . the reality of the world is bound up with the reality of God: to know what the world is in its true nature is to know that it is a manifestation of God."²¹ Or, if the being of the finite have its basis and ground in the being of the Infinite, how is the Infinite limited thereby? With the idea that the entire universe is essentially Revelation, there is no need of admitting limitation of Deity. A denial of this "Theistic Monism" forces us to choose between a Deistic dualism or some type of Pantheistic identity.²² Finite minds have no independently real existence, the ground of their being lies in the reality of the Universal Mind, but this surely does not limit the Universal Mind. We really meet the same difficulty here that was experienced in the stimulating symposium upon the question: "Can individual minds be included in the mind of God?"²³ Unless we can indicate precisely what is meant by inclusion, the problem cannot profitably be discussed.²⁴ So here, is there any accepted meaning of limitation which would indicate precisely the relation between Infinite Mind and finite minds? I think not. Not

²¹ The Phil. Basis of Religion, 357.

²² Bavinck, *Wysb. der Openb.*

²³ Problems of Science and Philosophy. (Aristotelean Society).

²⁴ Idem, especially the paper by D'Arcy.

only is it quite unnecessary, upon the basis of a proper conception of the existential relation between Absolute Being and finite being, to conceive of God as being limited by finite existents,²⁵ but when we again link this up with the idea of personality we come to the same conclusion. "The only God whom man is able to know cannot but put on—shall we say for man—the 'limits' of personality. But then, personality, as we have tried to see, does not fall under the category of limitation in any of its customary uses."²⁶ So once more we come to the conclusion that to admit as valid the claim of religious experience that its object be personal, does not at all imply that it must be conceived of as being limited, in any intelligible sense of the word.

The second aspect of the problem has reference to the limitation of power. If God be personal, it is claimed, he cannot be "omnipotent." Again the argument is two-fold, from the point of view of necessary limitation by an "other," which renders omnipotence impossible, and from the point of view of the existence of evil.

McTaggart contends that an omnipotent Personality needs an "other" to be personal, and that this is not found.²⁷ For this I need merely refer to what has been said about "otherness" in the Trinity. He persists in the view that "otherness," must necessarily be sought in the universe, and not in the being of God and consequently insists that a personal God cannot be omnipotent. "It is necessary that he should be capable of existing out of all relation to an Other if he is to be omnipotent. For if he were not, then he could only be a person on condition that a universe had arisen or would some day arise.

²⁵ Bavinck, *Dogm.*, II, 25.

²⁶ Wenley, *Contemporary Theol.*, 184.

²⁷ *Some Dogmas*, 204.

That is to say, it would be impossible for him to prevent the existence, some time or other, of a universe. And a person who cannot prevent something from taking place is clearly not omnipotent."²⁸ But it seems to me that several mistaken conceptions vitiate this whole argument. First, of course, that which has already been mentioned seeking "otherness" for divine personality in the existence of a universe, instead of in distinct hypostases of the Divine essence itself, as has historically always been done. Further a mistaken idea of the metaphysical relation between time and eternity. To say that a universe "would some day arise," and to speak of the impossibility of preventing the existence, "some time or other" of a universe, is clearly speaking of the existence of Deity in terms of time, which, as I have contended in the foregoing, is not permissible. And finally, to speak of inability to "prevent something taking place," meaning here the existence of the universe, is possible only upon the basis of the old, indefensible dualism of God and world. These three errors, it seems to me, render invalid this whole argument that a personal God cannot be omnipotent, but must be a limited God.

But more. All depends upon what we can mean by omnipotence. Here, I think, McTaggart's weakness manifests itself. His strength lies in dialectic rather than in historical sense, and the view of omnipotence which he presents is far from the view most universally held in historical thought upon the problem.²⁹ To say that if God can do everything and anything He is omnipotent, and if there are some things he cannot do, He is not omnipotent, is to my mind just as superficial as the complex question, can God make a stone so heavy that he cannot lift it?

²⁸ *Some Dogmas*, 205-6.

²⁹ *Some Dogmas*, 188 ff.

Galloway comes much nearer the true conception. "To test omnipotence by mere abstract possibility leads only to irrelevant subtleties. It may be quite true, as Augustine said, that it is not possible for God to die, to make what is done undone or what is false, true. Yet inability to perform what is intrinsically contradictory has no bearing on the positive conception of omnipotence. Nothing whatever would be gained for the idea of God by attributing to Him the power to do what is absurd. The initial error . . . lies in supposing that the abstract notions of possibility and impossibility are prior to the ultimately Real or God. . . . God is omnipotent since he has power to invest the content of his will with reality, and because the whole realm of mundane existence, including the system of inter-acting individuals, is constantly sustained by his activity. God is all powerful, for he is the independent and self-sufficient Ground of the being of the world, and therefore not limited by anything which does not proceed from his own will."³⁰

To test omnipotence,³¹ as is so often done, by presenting the problem of the possibility of God creating a universe in which the logical laws of Identity, Contradiction and Excluded Middle would not be valid is an abstract speculation to which no reality corresponds, and further an abstraction of those laws (even granting their validity as over against the recent contradiction of, for example, the law of Identity as a logical law by Wittgenstein and others) from the existing universe and then laying them down as laws to the Absolute Being in whom only they have the ground of their being. Such an attempt to show that God is not omnipotent by logical dialectic is not merely an error in methodology, but also a putting

³⁰ Galloway, *Phil. of Rel.*, 484, 485.

³¹ McTaggart, *Some Dogmas*, 203.

into the concept of omnipotence something which competent thinkers never did.

Historically there have been three diverging views concerning omnipotence. The nominalists took the position, differentiating between *potentia absoluta* and *potentia ordinata*, that God can not only do all he wills, but that he can also will everything, can therefore also sin, err, suffer, perform contradictory acts, render false what is true and true what is false. This *potentia absoluta* is therefore, upon this basis, pure caprice, and consequently, since it would imply contradiction between truth and power, would lead to contradictions in Absolute Being, which certainly is not permissible.³²

The other extreme contends that God can only do what He wills but cannot do what He does not will. Upon this basis the possible and the actual are identical. Whatever does not become actuality is not possible. The power of God is exhausted in the process of the world. Essentially this is the position of the Cartesians, of Spinoza, Schleiermacher, Strausz, and others.³³

Still others, and these, I think, more correctly, hold that God can do all he wills, but cannot will everything. But to admit that God cannot will everything is not an admission of limitation or of impotence. For, in the nature of the case omnipotence must have a positive meaning and content, and to be able to sin, to err, to be false, to deny Himself, would rather be indication of impotence than power.³⁴ Whereas, in our conception of the relation between essence and attribute there is distinction and differentiation but no division, one attribute cannot contradict another. And further as eternity does not empty

³² Bavinck, Dogm., II, 250.

³³ Bavinck, Dogm., II, 250.

³⁴ Augustine, Term., 213, 214. Bavinck, Dogm., II, 250.

itself into time, infinity is not the sum total of all that is finite, the actual does not exhaust the potential, so also omnipotence transcends the unlimited power which manifests itself in the cosmos.³⁵

A view of an omnipotence that is not bound to the essence and perfection of Deity would be an indefensible separation of essence and attributes and would bring about contradiction between goodness and power. Whatever one may think of Bradley's principle of non-contradiction³⁶ as an absolute criterion, it must undoubtedly be admitted that contradiction cannot be conceived of as existing in Absolute Being.

When McTaggart, therefore, puts into the concept of omnipotence something which cannot legitimately be conceived of as belonging to it, and then says that, consequently God must be non-omnipotent, he is, I think, guilty of pummeling a straw man. Especially would this seem to be true when he insists, "I maintain that omnipotence is incompatible with personality."³⁷ How this conception of omnipotence of necessity must be incompatible with personality as predicable of Absolute Being I, frankly, do not see.

It is, finally, contended that a personal God cannot be omnipotent because of the undeniable existence of evil, unless we sacrifice his perfect goodness. For, it is said, if God be perfect in goodness, it is inconceivable that evil should exist, except upon the assumption that He is not omnipotent. Therefore, to maintain goodness, omnipotence is sacrificed. It is thought that a personal God cannot be both, in the face of all that can rightly be called evil. McTaggart goes even further. "By God I mean a

³⁵ Bavinck, *Dogm.*, II, 252, 253.

³⁶ Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, 136.

³⁷ *Some Dogmas*, 202.

being who is personal, supreme, and good. In calling him personal, I mean to assert that he is self-conscious, that he has that awareness of his own existence which I have of my own existence. In calling him supreme, I do not mean to assert that he is omnipotent, but that he is, at the least much more powerful than any other being, . . . In calling him good, I do not mean to assert that he is perfect, but that he is, at the least, of such a nature that he would be rightly judged to be more good than evil."³⁸ "That is all that the doctrine of a non-omnipotent God can give us: a person who fights for the good and who may be victorious. But it is at any rate better than the doctrine of an omnipotent person to whom Good and Evil are equally pleasing."³⁹ Because of evil, therefore, God must be a limited God with respect to his power, which of course immediately raises the question, how can we then be certain that ultimately the good will be supreme, and not evil?⁴⁰ Or more emphatically, "To this way of thinking, however, there appears to me to be one fatal objection. It relieves God of the responsibility for the evil in the world only at the cost of depriving him of his Godhead."⁴¹

Quite naturally I shall not here concern myself with the problem of evil as such, but merely limit myself to the question, does the existence of evil necessarily lead to a denial of either the personality or the omnipotence or the goodness of Absolute Being? And then it seems to me that those who answer in the affirmative really miss the thrust of the whole situation. For the real problem is not, what is the relation between evil and the *power* of God, but, what is the relation between evil and the *will*

³⁸ Some Dogmas, 186.

³⁹ Some Dogmas, 260.

⁴⁰ D'Arcy, *God and Freedom*, 180.

⁴¹ Webb, *God and Personality*, 192.

of God? For, to insist that evil is incompatible with omnipotence is again a mistaken conception of the real, positive nature of omnipotence, beside being dangerously close to the old dualistic position of two principles. To link the existence of evil up with the absolute goodness of Deity comes nearer the heart of the problem but requires first of all an investigation into the question of the nature of evil as such and its relation to ultimate reality, and again, I do not think that this investigation is called for at this juncture, in connection with the question of personality and infinity. The point at issue here is rather, does the existence of evil mean that a personal God must therefore be a limited God? But when we shift the problem to its proper sphere, namely how must we conceive of the relation between evil and the *will* of God, it becomes evident, I think, that omnipotence and infinity need not be sacrificed. True, evil then not only is, but will remain a problem. But nothing is gained by confusing problems. And that, it seems to me, McTaggart does. For to speak of "an omnipotent person to whom Good and Evil are equally pleasing,"⁴² certainly is presenting a view of the relation between evil and the will of God which is not only absolutely indefensible but which has historically never been seriously and consistently entertained even by the most radical supralapsarians. But when we keep this problem in its rightful sphere, and that, I take it, need not be elaborated upon here, it would follow that evil in no wise implies that the personal God demanded by religious experience is limited or finite.

I agree then most profoundly with Webb's conclusion, that "the existence of Evil, though it must always present itself as a problem for the Philosophy of Religion, does not, as is urged from two opposite quarters, so espe-

⁴² Some Dogmas, 260.

cially affect the acknowledgment of Personality in God as to put us to a choice between denying to God either personality or that 'infinity' (if we are so to call it) without which, unless I am completely mistaken, he cannot really be at all what a philosophically cultivated theology can mean by God."⁴³

My conclusion is that divine personality and infinity are not at all incompatible nor contradictory. There remains the problem of divine personality and absoluteness, by far the most difficult.

⁴³ God and Personality, 193.

CHAPTER IV.

DIVINE PERSONALITY AND ABSOLUTENESS

The problem of the personality and the absoluteness of God is both old and new. Old, in so far as the content of the problem is concerned; new, with respect to the form it has assumed during the last twenty-five or thirty years. Old, since it essentially involves the problem of the One and the Many, familiar since Greek thought; new, since the modern Idealists have stressed different aspects or nuances of the difficulties involved.

If God be personal can he still be Absolute? If, from the point of view of the philosophy of Religion, as differing from the standpoint of theology, ". . . we must set out from the analogy of our own ego, the substantial being which alone is immediately known to us; . . . and from this we may conclude to the being of God as the Primal ego of the all-embracing whole of the world,"¹ there can be no question, I think, about the validity of the demand made by the religious experience concerning the personal nature of its object. But the question remains, is this personality compatible with absoluteness? Even if we do heed Pfeiderer's warning, the "persistent problem" of modern philosophy of religion remains clamorously present. "On the one side we manifestly must not conceive of God as only one whole of several, or one particular being after our limited manner, having other particular beings outside him, co-ordinated with him, and so

¹ Pfeiderer, *Phil. of Rel.*, III, 279, 280.

no longer the unity of the whole which connects together all its particular parts, but having need himself to be combined with other co-ordinate beings in a higher whole. As little must we, on the other side, blot out those determinations of being which we find present in our own ego or weaken them down till they are meaningless, with the view that we can only preserve the "absoluteness of God" by removing all clear distinctions till nothing remains but monotonous uniformity."² This is, I think, a remarkable prevision of the direction in which the answer is to be sought for the problem later so insistently raised, what is the relation between the God of religion and the Absolute of philosophy, of which the problem of personality and absoluteness is one aspect. With the question of the relation between God and the Absolute I concern myself at present only in so far as this is related to the question of absolute personality, and therefore, not in all its aspects.

Again it is Bradley who has given the greatest impetus to the discussion of the problem in its present form.³ Bosanquet has carried out certain implications inherent in Bradley's views.⁴ And to stay merely within the confines of the same general school of thought, the problem has been discussed broadly by Pringle-Pattison,⁵ D'Arcy,⁶ Royce,⁷ Watson,⁸ Moberly,⁹ Rashdall,¹⁰ Galloway,¹¹

² Pfeiderer, *Phil. of Rel.*, III, 280.

³ *Appearance and Reality*, 445 ff. 527 ff. *Essays on Truth and Reality*, esp. Ch. 15.

⁴ *Principle of Individuality and Value*, 255 ff.

⁵ *Idea of God*, Lectures 14 and 15, and Note E, 430 ff. Ch. 1 in *The Spirit*.

⁶ *God and Freedom in Human Experience*, Ch. 4.

⁷ *The Conception of God*.

⁸ *Phil. basis of Rel.*, Lecture 13.

⁹ *In: Foundations*, 426-524.

¹⁰ *In: Contentio Veritates*, 1-58. *In Personal Idealism*, 392 ff.

¹¹ *Phil. of Rel. and Studies in the Phil. of Rel.*

Webb,¹² and others, beside adherents of other tendencies in reflective thought.

The question can perhaps best be put thus: If we identify God with the Absolute, as this is conceived of by Bradley, Bosanquet, and those agreeing with them, can he then still be personal, or must we not, as Bosanquet insists, conceive of him merely as individual, and not as personal? If, on the other hand we maintain that God is personal, can he still be identified with the Absolute or must we, with Bradley, hold that he is then merely an appearance of the Absolute?¹³ Or, if we hold that God is both personal and absolute, can we still continue to use the term Absolute in the same sense and with the same meaning that Bradley and Bosanquet do?¹⁴ This not only implies that we are to have a "clear and distinct" idea as to the meanings we attach to these terms, but that we also hold to one attempted solution of the problem of the relation between God and world rather than to another.

If, then, by the Absolute we mean the "whole" or the "principle of unity," or the "universe,"¹⁵ I think it is quite evident that we cannot identify the personal God of religion with such a whole. Granted this conception of the Absolute, although this is precisely one of the points at issue, Bradley is undoubtedly right when he says, "The Absolute for me cannot be God, because in the end the Absolute is related to nothing, and there cannot be a practical relation between it and the finite will. When you begin to worship the Absolute, or the Universe, and make it the object of religion, you in that moment have trans-

¹² God and Personality. Divine Personality and Human Life. Problems in the Relations of God and Man.

¹³ Appearance and Reality, 445 ff.

¹⁴ Galloway, *Phil. of Rel.*, 480, 481.

¹⁵ Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, passim. Webb, *God and Personality*, 220.

formed it. It has become something forthwith which is less than the Universe."¹⁶ And surely, the Absolute, in this sense, is not the God of religion.¹⁷ Yet, upon Bradley's own basis we meet a unique difficulty. He admits "There is nothing more real than what comes in religion," and "The man, who demands a reality more solid than that of the religious consciousness, seeks he does not know what."¹⁸ He quite agrees that in matters religious, religion itself is the court of final appeal. And, though it is questionable whether Bradley would admit it yet "when once a stage of development has been reached at which the question of the relation of God to the Absolute would arise, no conception of God which takes him for less than the Ultimate reality will satisfy the demands of the religious consciousness."¹⁹ Granting the truth of this, as I think we must, how can we then still deny the absoluteness of God? On the other hand, if we admit the validity of this claim of religion, and at the same time realize that the Absolute in the sense of the "whole" is not the object of devotion, are we not forced to change our conception of the Absolute? Apparently, then, we are confronted with a dilemma. Either the Absolute is God, in which case he cannot be personal, as religion demands, or the Absolute is not God, and then he cannot be the ultimate reality, without which religion cannot adequately rest in its object. To avoid the difficulty, as so many attempt to do by considering religion an illusion and God an hypothesis is, it seems to me, a very superficial denial of an inescapable fact of experience rather than an explanation of it. Bradley, of course, recognizes the hollowness of such an at-

¹⁶ Essays, 428.

¹⁷ Bradley, *Appearance*, 446. Essays, 433.

¹⁸ *Appearance*, 449.

¹⁹ Webb, *God and Personality*, 137. Pfeiderer, *Phil. of God*, III, 290.

tempt and holds himself far from it.²⁰ But it seems to me that there is a "more excellent way."

One of the first steps in the direction of this better way, is to rid the concept of God as Bradley holds it, of some indefensible elements. He maintains, "I cannot accept God as an ultimate truth."²¹ However, he seems to think that this would of necessity imply Deism, for he continues, "A God who has made this strange and glorious nature *outside of which he remains*, is an idea at best one-sided. Confined to this idea we lose large realms of what is beautiful and sublime, and even for religion our conception of goodness suffers. Unless the Maker and Sustainer becomes also the indwelling Life and Mind and the inspiring Love, how much of the Universe is impoverished. . . . But how this necessary 'pantheism' is to be made consistent with an individual Creator I myself do not perceive."²²

Is it necessary to say that the conception of a God who *remains outside of nature* is purely Deistic? And though I am fully in sympathy with the necessary position: *Deismus delendus est*, I nevertheless submit that this "indwelling" is by no means a "necessary pantheism." For immanence is a rather different conception and does not at all imply identity. Hence, due it seems to Bradley's "Gottesbegriff," this whole trend of argument loses its force when directed against the position that God is an ultimate truth.

Pfleiderer's conception is at least more defensible. "God is thus at the same time the ego who is in himself and distinguishes himself from everything finite, and the all-embracing whole who has all things in and under him-

²⁰ Appearance, 450.

²¹ Essays, 435.

²² Essays, 435.

self, nothing outside himself; he neither disappears in the world nor is he excluded from it, he comprehends it in himself as the unfolded system of his own thoughts and powers. This, I conceive, is *true, complete monotheism*, in which deistic and pantheistic abstraction are alike transcended. Whether, indeed, the notion of 'Personality' is to be applied or not to the nature of God as thus described, can be left to each one to determine according to his views of the use of language; in point of substance it matters nothing, provided only that those who apply this notion to God do not compromise the all-embracing wholeness of God, nor make him again (as indeed theologians, at least, usually do), a particular being who is co-ordinate with other persons; and that those who do not consider the notions a suitable one to apply to God do not compromise the ego of God, and (as indeed philosophers usually do) empty him of all contents, leaving nothing but a vague pantheistic ghost devoid of all reality and all character."²³

Indeed, why not go all the way and maintain, not that the Absolute in the Bradleyan sense is God, but that God is the Absolute? Not in any Spinozistic sense, nor in the sense of the Panentheism of Baader and Krause,²⁴ but in the sense of historic theism. I do not consider it necessary or defensible to reject all idea of an absolute, as the "tough-minded" do. For both religion and philosophy some conception of an absolute is indispensable,²⁵ but then all depends upon precisely what we can mean by such an absolute, and still do justice to every element of experience as well as to every logical demand. Though Rashdall rightly refuses to identify God and the philosophical

²³ Phil. of Religion, III, 290.

²⁴ Pfeleiderer, Phil. of Rel., III, 253.

²⁵ Bavinck, Dogm., II, 106.

Absolute as interpreted by the majority of the Hegelian tradition, it is perhaps his trenchant pen which leads him to the mistaken characterization of the Absolute as "a phrase which might well be dispensed with."²⁶ The term is, indeed, indispensable, but this does not mean that the abstract logical Absolute of dialectic is the only, or the proper meaning, and from the point of view of the absoluteness which religion demands in its object,²⁷ Webb's apt remark is quite to the point, "It implies that nothing is left out, but it does not say what is there."²⁸

Several thinkers do, indeed, tend toward the conception that God is the Absolute, but deterred by the problem of the existence of the universe, or perhaps by the fear of acosmism on the one hand and pantheism on the other, have halted this side of completeness. When Ward says, "... the only Absolute then that we can admit is the absolute which God and the world constitute,"²⁹ the difficulty of the relation between the two is not solved. If the two are co-ordinate, in the sense of possessing the same kind of reality, religious consciousness is most assuredly violated. If the reality of the world is subordinated to the reality of God as its ultimate and absolute ground, then the pluralistic expression God-and-the-world loses all real significance as an expression of the content of the Absolute. But it is especially Webb who comes nearest the position of conceiving of God as the Absolute without going the entire distance. When he approaches the sharp formulation he wavers. The following quotations will, I think, make this clear.

"... [that] I take God, that is, the object of my religious worship, to be the one all-comprehending Reality,

²⁶ Personal Idealism, 392.

²⁷ Webb, *God and Personality*, 137, 143, 146, 154.

²⁸ *Problems*, 188.

²⁹ *Realm of Ends*, 242.

but that in worshipping, I recognize *this as God*, that is, I recognize that this one all-comprehending Reality is worshipful; and so God is more (not less) than the Absolute, in so far as in religion I know (or at least feel) the Absolute to be in this respect more than by itself the abstract term Absolute expresses."³⁰

"I should even insist that the object of religious devotion cannot when once the question is raised, be held to be less than the Ultimate Reality."³¹ "I will confess that in the sense in which we may rightly speak of degrees of reality and of God's reality being greater than yours or mine, I should not attribute a higher degree of reality to the 'Universe as a whole' than to God; for it is, as I take it, only in God that the universe is a whole."³² "I am convinced that Religion cannot, when once it has reached the stage at which the question has become intelligible, give any but an affirmative answer to the question whether God is the Absolute."³³

With respect to the first quotation, I fully agree with Webb in conceiving of God as the one, all-comprehending Reality, but to make the deity of this Reality depend upon our knowledge or worship is a totally different matter, as is also the view of God as more than the Absolute. Of course, ultimately the question at issue here is the relation of the reality of God to the reality of the universe. If, then, we hold that God is the only Ultimate Reality, indeed the sole Reality, and "neither religion nor philosophy can seriously entertain any other alternative,"³⁴ the reality of the universe is a contingent reality, dependent for its very being upon the being of God. God, then, is

³⁰ Problems, 253-254.

³¹ God and Personality, 143.

³² Idem, 146.

³³ Idem, 154.

³⁴ Pringle-Pattison, *Philosophical Radicals*, p. 211.

the only independent Reality, whereas the reality of the universe is a dependent reality and it is in God that it "lives, moves, and has its being." That is not, I take it, a denial of the reality of the universe, but of its absolute independence. Contingency is not a denial of existence. It is quite true that "it is only in God that the universe is a whole." Even more. It is only in God that the universe *is*. In the sense of being the only independent, unconditioned, uncaused reality, God can certainly be called the Absolute, or Absolute Being. Of course, this implies the use of the term Absolute in a different sense than the systematic whole." But because of the relation between God and world, I do not think that such a—shall I call it Bradleyan—use of a term, "apparently so ambiguous in its import and so questionable in its antecedents,"³⁵ is adequate or defensible. Absolute is here rather meant in the sense of the perfectly independent, unconditioned Reality which is the ultimate ground of all finite existences.³⁶ If this is what is meant by Absolute, Webb is quite right, in that the religious consciousness cannot "forbear the demand that the supreme God should be the supreme Reality, the Absolute, and nothing less."³⁷ But it is only when we use the term Absolute in the abstract sense of the "whole" that problems become multiplied and confused by the addition, "apart from the religious consciousness the Absolute cannot be known as God."³⁸

When, therefore, I say that God is the Absolute I mean that He is the sole, ultimate Reality having the ground of being in nothing but Himself, and being in Himself the sole cause and the sole ground of all other being, which has its reality in being a manifestation or

³⁵ Pringle-Pattison, *Idea of God*, 432.

³⁶ Galloway, *Phil. of Rel.*, 481.

³⁷ *God and Personality*, 219.

³⁸ *Idem*, 219.

revelation of this Absolute Being. This implies on the one hand, of course, the transcendence of Absolute Being, not a spatial, but an essential transcendence by which Absolute Being differs in essence from finite being so that no speculative pantheism is required, and on the other hand the immanence of Absolute Being as the ultimate ground of all other existence, which, though real, cannot upon this basis be independently real. Of course, I realize full well that this leaves many a question unanswered, and many a problem unsolved. But it seems to me that, however difficult the remaining problems may be, the philosophy of religion can be satisfied with nothing less in its conception of the object of the religious experience.³⁹ But further discussion of these problems is not, I take it, germane to the present purpose. I am here merely concerned with the contention that a personal God, such as the religious experience undeniably manifests, cannot be absolute. And as over against this I would agree with Galloway, "There is however a valid meaning which the word absolute may have when applied to God. God is Absolute in that he is the unconditioned Ground of all finite existences. God may therefore be appropriately designated the Absolute Ground of the world, for he is the sole and sufficient reason of its exist-

³⁹ Wenley, *Contemporary Theology*, 181 ff.

Webb, *God and Personality*, 148 ff.

D'Arcy, *God and Freedom*, 110 ff.

Pringle-Pattison, *Idea of God*, 253 ff. and Note E, 430 ff.

Immanence and Transcendence, (*The Spirit*), 4-22.

Pfleiderer, *Phil. of Rel.*, III, 290.

Galloway, *Phil. of Rel.*, 481.

Leighton, *Man and the Cosmos*, 495 ff.

Watson, *Phil. Basis of Religion*, 357.

Wobbermin, *Christian Belief in God*, 142.

Hodge, *Systematic Theol.*, I, 391, 392.

Bavinck, *Dogm.*, II, 106, 107.

Coffey, *Ontology*, 46-50.

ence. He may also be called Absolute because He is a Being harmonious and self-complete, whose consciousness embraces the whole universe. But Absolute in the theistic conception is definitely distinguished from the Speculative Absolute."⁴⁰ And Pfleiderer,⁴¹ if I understand him correctly, is in essential agreement with this, if we discount the tendency toward the Hegelian "inclination to solve the theistic problem by quietly ceasing to be theistic."⁴² So also Sorley, ". . . if by the Absolute is meant the sum-total of all reality, then it must be allowed that there are real events and real beings which do not in their present state manifest the divine nature. But there is nothing outside God in the sense of being independent of his nature or will."⁴³ Wobbermin at least tends in the same direction. ". . . we can say that the conception of God corresponding to the Christian belief in God is that of the *unified totality* (*einheitliche Allheit*) of *spiritual ethical personal life*. To be sure this concept of unified totality also seems to involve a self-contradiction. But it does so in no greater degree for the sphere of the absolute than does the concept of unified diversity for the domain of the finite. And such unified diversity is an actual fact."⁴⁴

Upon this theistic basis there is, I think, no such incompatibility between personality and absoluteness as there is in the distinctly antitheistic development represented by Bradley and Bosanquet. They are no more inconsistent than are personality and infinity, in the sense developed above. Indeed, only when we conceive of God

⁴⁰ Phil. of Rel., 481; see also: Macintosh, Theol. as an Empirical Science, 176-178.

⁴¹ Phil. of Rel., III, 290.

⁴² Wenley, Contemporary Theology, 170.

⁴³ Moral Values, 493.

⁴⁴ Christian Belief in God, 147.

as being the Absolute in the sense indicated, can we maintain that it is in Him only that we find perfect personality.⁴⁵ More, only then can we maintain a divine personality which is not ontologically dependent upon human personality or upon relations with finite being. Let it be true on the one hand that personality is a concept borrowed from ourselves and therefore in this sense inadequate when applied to God,⁴⁶ and on the other hand that in the philosophy of religion "we must set out from the position and must resolutely hold to it that we can only know the nature of God after an analogy of our own ego,"⁴⁷ nevertheless, or perhaps just because of this, especially from the point of view of the inadequacy of the analogy, full justice cannot be done to the personality of Deity unless we admit His absoluteness.

It is quite true, if I may introduce another "*Lehn-satz*," that the problem of personality and absoluteness is one which has always been recognized in the realm of theology, and has led to the distinction between negative and positive theology, or apophatic and cataphatic theology.⁴⁸ This has always admitted that we are confronted with an apparent antinomy. It would seem that in our thoughts we either lower the absoluteness down to the level of the finite and thus make God a finite, quasi-human being, or in the attempt to transcend the limitations of space and time we bar from the idea of God all similarity to finite being and attain merely to an empty abstract concept that has no value for religion.⁴⁹ The solution however is not to be found by identifying absolute with undefined and unrelated, and then barring personality from this upon

⁴⁵ Lotze.

⁴⁶ Bavinck, *Dogm.*, II, 26.

⁴⁷ Pfleiderer, *Phil. of Rel.*, III, 280.

⁴⁸ Bavinck, *Dogm.*, II, 22.

⁴⁹ *Idem*, II, 23.

penalty of reducing absolute to mere appearance. No more than that the finite is a denial of God's infinity if it but have the ground of its being therein, is personality a denial of absoluteness, if we do not attempt to fit God to the Procrustean bed of a speculative conception of an abstract Absolute, but seriously attempt to formulate what that God must be who is concretely experienced in religion.

But does it follow from this that we may, as J. H. Fichte, Carus, Steffens, Weisse, Ulrici, and others conclude that absolute personality furnishes us with an adequate description of the essence of God as the ultimate Reality?⁵⁰ As a reaction against a vapid pantheism with its denial of divine personality, many have again so stressed the inescapable necessity of the personality of the object of religious experience, that they have gone to the opposite extreme of considering personality to be the exhaustive and sufficient account of the essence of Reality. This, however, I hold to be an indefensible extreme. It is, undoubtedly, praiseworthy to insist upon divine personality, in order to do full justice to the indisputable character of religious experience, and to consider this a correct expression of his essence. But to present this as the *only*, or the *ultimate* expression thereof, is rather a different matter.⁵¹

As over against the view that personality is the essence of Reality, or that it is "our canon of reality,"⁵² I would rather agree with D'Arcy, "While we must attribute personality to the Supreme, personality as it exists in us is not a sufficient account of His nature,"⁵³

⁵⁰ Bavinck, *Dogm.*, II, 25.

⁵¹ Bavinck, *Dogm.*, II, 105.

⁵² Merrington, *The Problem of Personality*, 43, 211, 212.

⁵³ *God and Freedom*, 104.

even adding that this holds true also of personality in the sense in which it can, as transcending the limitations of the finite and human, properly be predicated of Absolute Being. Or, ". . . the higher spiritual life cannot be completely defined in terms of personality or selfhood."⁵⁴ Bradley contends, ". . . a personal God is not the ultimate truth about the universe, and in that, ultimate truth would be included and superceded by something higher than personality."⁵⁵ If this be construed to mean that God *as God* is not the ultimate truth of the Universe, as though any conception of any universe whatsoever as having independent reality apart from the reality of God were tenable, according to any one of the nuances of the deistic tradition, I would most certainly and most emphatically disagree. But, if this means, apart from the idea of "super-personality" that the conception of God as personal is inadequate for our idea of ultimate truth, this is, I think, indisputable. Or, in other words, personality is not a fully comprehensive, adequate description of the divine essence.

Also the view of Wobbermin is, I think, rather questionable. He does admit that three factors characterize the nature of God, namely, "the absolute and ethical personality of God, the absolute transcendence or sublimity of God, and the absolute immanence or pervasiveness of God."⁵⁶ But when he says that these three factors "are really not of equal importance, but that the first factor, the ethical personality of God is predominant over the other two,"⁵⁷ he takes what I hold to be an untenable position.

If God, as ultimate Reality, were such that any one

⁵⁴ D'Arcy in: *Life and Finite Individuality*, 155.

⁵⁵ *Essays*, 432.

⁵⁶ *Christian Belief in God*, 142.

⁵⁷ *Idem*, 143.

nomen could adequately express his essence, the situation be immensely simplified. But it is not thus.⁵⁸

May I be permitted once more, now for the last time, to illustrate how theology can in this situation aid the philosophy of religion? Though on the one hand, upon the basis of the proper conception of the relation between essence and attribute, personality must be conceived of as belonging to the essence of God, and not merely to the proprietates of the hypostases, and as over against the pantheistic "Gottesbegriff" it is necessary to insist upon the essential personality of Deity, on the other hand to conceive of personality as an exhaustive indication, par excellence, of the essence is to be avoided. Not only because this might easily lead to the conception of Deity as "Einzelpersönlichkeit," but also because it implies that other attributes are subordinate, which would, in the very nature of the case, be indefensible. Therefore, theology, always, of course, bearing in mind that this procedure is merely due to the inevitable limitations of our thought, preferred to emphasize the aseity of God. If any such distinction is permissible, and the necessity can scarcely be avoided, it is preeminently the fact that God is *ens a se* that distinguishes Him from all finite being as *ens ab alio*. And on the one hand, the fact that He is *ens a se* does not at all exclude the possibility of personality, and on the other it permits of absoluteness. It is, therefore, this emphasis, rather than the other, that sheds light upon the "more excellent way" of conceiving of God as personal, thus satisfying the demand inherently characteristic of religious experience, and at the same time as the Ultimate Reality, who is the true Absolute, in whom "we live, move and have our being."⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Bavinck, Dogm., II, 113.

⁵⁹ Bavinck, Dogm., II, 105, 106, 107, 112, 113, 312 ff.

I conclude, therefore, that God is not only personal, but that an admission of his personality is not a denial of His infinity, nor of His absoluteness. But also of this it must be admitted, not necessarily as an indication of weakness, though "we see through a glass, darkly," but rather as a confession of an undeniable truth: "Like other Christians I cannot 'prove' these things any more than I can 'prove' my own existence. But I am able to say humbly, '*I know.*' I am saluted by the discordant shouts of the old, old quarrel between the 'head' and the 'heart,' a duel destined to last with the human race. But the two could not disagree unless they belonged together. Patience with the plea of each alone will set the door of truth ajar. For neither has reason to say to the other, 'I have no need of thee.'

Practice 'proves' truth, but
practice formulated by the head."⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Wenley, *Modern Thought and the Crisis in Belief*, 360.

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